BCHF 100 YEARS

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORY

The British Columbia Historical Federation Magazine | Vol 55 No 1

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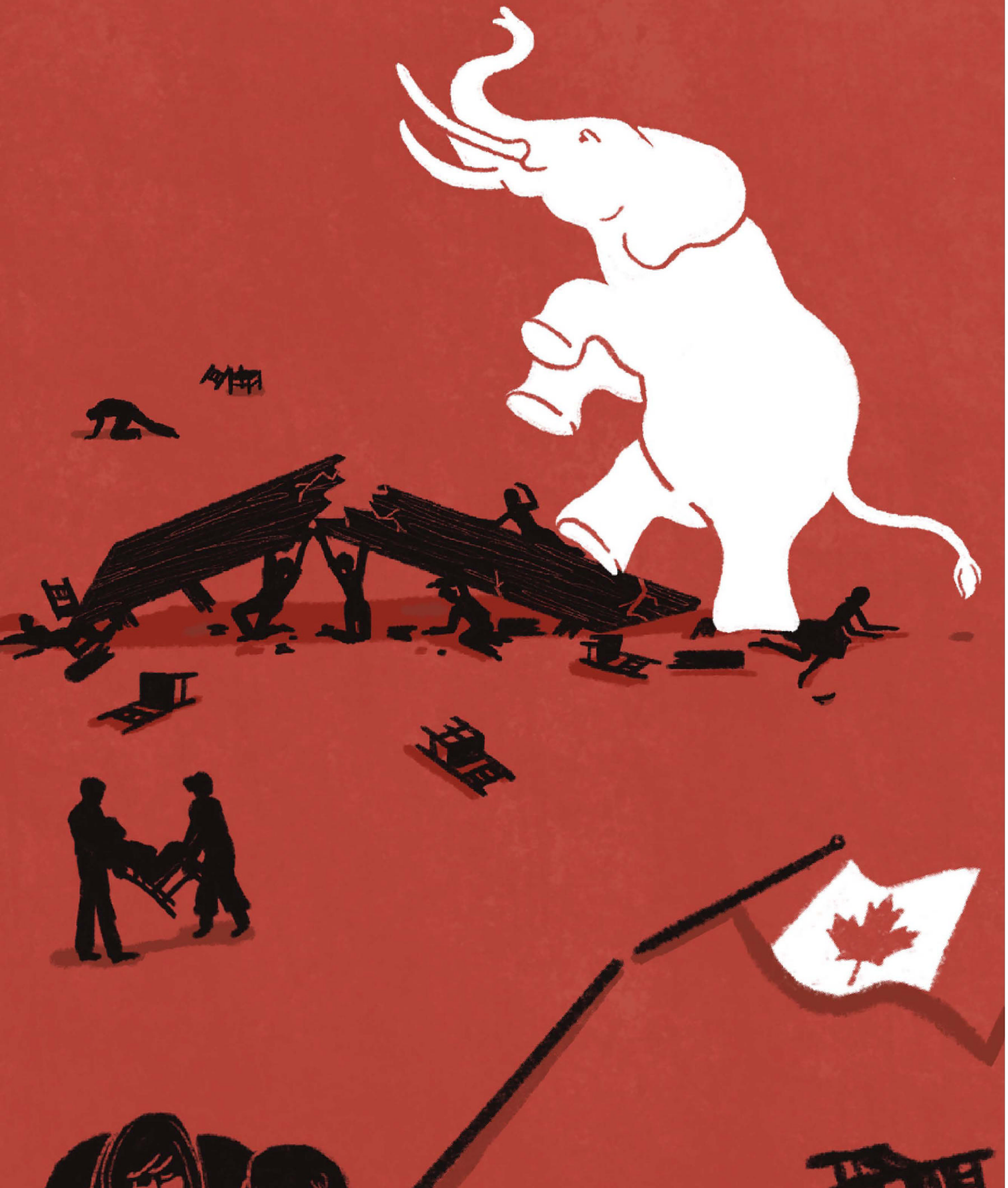
The White Elephant in the Room

Anti-Asian racism in Canada



- Without a Trace: A small but important piano
- Grouse Nest: The most mysterious house in Sooke
- Unearthing Prince George's History
- Being an Activist Historian
- The Return of Sumas Lake
- The Art of the Spy: Henry James Warre
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In this issue

Published by the British Columbia Historical Federation | Spring 2022 | Vol. 55 No. 1

Features

5

Without a Trace: A small but important piano

By Michael Abe

A popular Japanese tea garden in Tramway Gorge Park was the brainchild of Yoshijiro (Joe) Kishida. It was served by boat from downtown Victoria, and during the voyage passengers were entertained by a small piano with a storied life.

10

The White Elephant in the Room: Anti-Asian racism in Canada

By Henry Yu

A little-acknowledged part of the fabric of Canada, anti-Asian racism has been shaped—and continues to flourish—in the quiet framework of white supremacy in BC and in legacies of policy and attitude that connect past to present.

14

Grouse Nest: The most mysterious house in Sooke

By Paul G. Chamberlain

A property with ties to royalty, Hollywood actors, and arms dealers, the Grouse Nest was also a family home and resort. Its history is a story of debt and desire.

18

Unearthing Prince George's History

By Alyssa Leier

Recent archaeological work close to the confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers has important implications with respect to understanding the scope of human history in the territory of the Lheidli T'enneh.

20

Being an Activist Historian

By Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra

History has often been told from the colonizer's perspective, relegating racialized groups to the margins. As an historian, educator, Sikh woman, and mother, Sandhra reflects on the importance of telling racialized stories, resisting harmful patterns in documenting history, and inspiring a future of activist historians.

24

The Return of Sumas Lake

By Chad Reimer

What was lost and what was gained in the massive project of draining Sumas Lake a century ago? Recent catastrophic flooding in the Fraser Valley invites the kind of context offered in this excerpt from Chad Reimer's 2018 book.

26

The Art of the Spy: Henry James Warre

By Ed Mannings

Hand-coloured lithographs created by this talented artist, traveller, and spy are some of the earliest documentary representations of the Kootenays, and they capture a landscape both changed and unchanged.

27

"Some Loving Words" from an Arrow Lakes Pioneer to his Fiancée in 1921

By Paula Pope

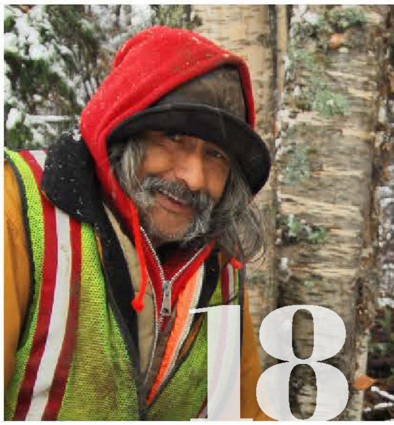
A long-lost letter carries a glimpse into lives lived a century ago—and is itself a testament to the value of story.

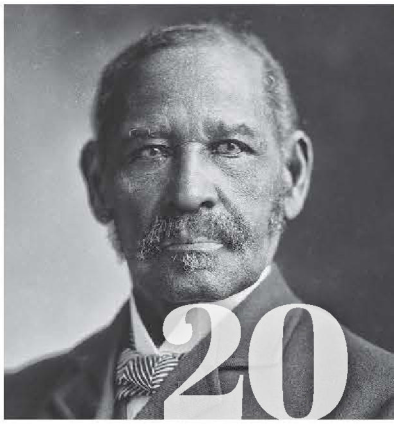
30

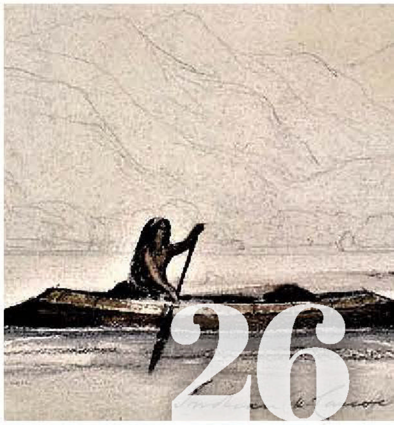
On Hallowed Ground: The crash of Flight QCA102

By Darrell Ohs

The worst aviation disaster in BC history happened near Nanaimo on a rainy night in 1951. The Nanaimo Historical Society hopes to commemorate the dead through the creation of a memorial at Northfield Rotary Lookout Park.







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Regulars

4 INBOX

34 SHARING SPACE | States of Matter
By Jenn Ashton
Our Writer-In-Residence shares an excerpt from her book, *People Like Frank and Other Stories from the Edge of Normal,* and her thoughts on re-interpreting history.

35 EXPLORER IN RESIDENCE | The Wake of History
By Bert ter Hart
Meet our new contributor as he prepares to journey across Canada by foot and canoe using traditional navigational techniques. Learn about his plans and his desire to understand the enduring connections people have with the trails and landscapes of the past.

41 TIME TRAVELS | Okanagan Historical Society
By Mark Forsythe
BC's Okanagan Historical Society has a rich tradition of annual reports dating back to 1925. These reports collect a wealth of information, covering cultural diversity, family histories, scholarly studies, and natural history.

43 ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVISTS | Snapshot
By Emily Lonie
Ten BC archivists share their favourite photographs from one hundred years ago.

47 REFRACTING HISTORY | Books with the Most Impact
Aimee Greenaway

52 THEN AND NOW | JD Ross Showcase Factory
By Mark Forsythe and Sandra Shiell
This ghost sign in Mount Pleasant connects a woman to her great-great-grandfather's past as the owner of a plate-glass showcase factory.

This Issue

3 GUEST EDITOR'S NOTE
BC Historical Federation: One hundred years of community
By Shannon Bettles

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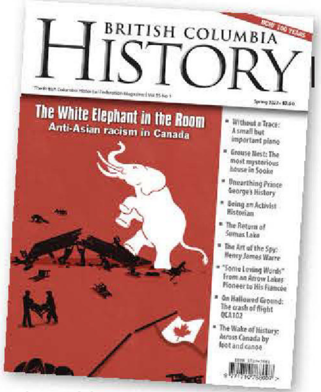

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BCHF 100 YEARS
The White Elephant in the Room
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Without a Trace: A small but important piano
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The Wake of History: Across Canada by foot and canoe

FRONT COVER

Katya Margarita Roxas is a Filipina communicator and freelance illustrator based in Vancouver. Born and raised in the Philippines, Katya aims to express her lived experiences and culture through visual storytelling. Katya works as a Communications and Design Strategist at The University of British Columbia

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORY

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Canada

BC Historical Federation: One hundred years of community

DON YOUNG, 2017

Shannon Bettles

Today I learned that on January 11, 2022, Kaye Kaminishi turned 100 years old. He is the last living member of the legendary Vancouver Asahi baseball club. It's pretty incredible to think about—the things that Kaye and other centenarians would have seen throughout their lifetimes. As we enter another year of the global pandemic, I am curious about the resilience someone like Kaye must have had throughout his 100 years.

There are so many questions I would like to ask him.

A century is a long time to live and gain wisdom—to keep learning from the past. As the BC Historical Federation turns 100 years old on June 22, 2022, the significance of the organization's longevity is not lost on me. I've had to follow in some pretty big footsteps; some incredible presidents and board members have worked hard for the Federation before me.

Looking back, 2021 was a difficult year for heritage organizations and historical societies in BC. We continue to feel effects from the pandemic, and we face even greater challenges ahead of us as we grapple with extreme weather events brought about by climate change. Our hearts are with the communities affected by the heat domes and wildfires, such as Lytton and those who experienced the November floods in the Sumas Valley, Merritt, and Princeton. We acknowledge the pain of Indigenous communities as the truths about Indian Residential Schools are retold, and we stand with those communities in our province who are fighting back against racism.

Looking ahead, the Federation will be considering what it means to exist as an organization for 100 years. We'll examine where the organization began, why it was formed, and what has happened in the history of the organization and the wider history of BC and beyond. Some of our stories are difficult—to begin with, the Federation itself is a product of colonization. Today, as the BCHF reconciles with this fact, we work to promote shared stories from many voices around the province, guided by communities who are sharing their history, culture, and heritage in their own way.

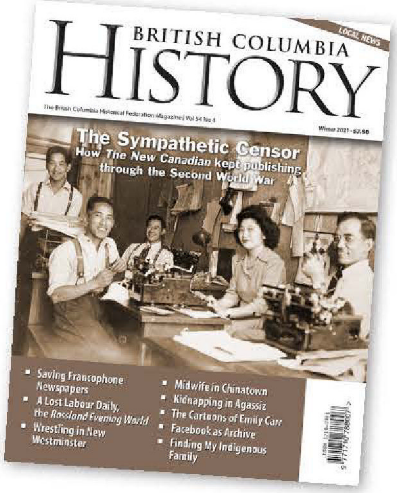
And we salute our membership, composed of the province's historical societies, historic sites, museums, archives, First Nations, and those participating or working in the field of public history, culture, and heritage. You've stood by us and supported our initiatives, and you continue to serve communities across this vast province.

As I complete my three-year term as President this year—nearly all of it during a pandemic—I look forward to attending future in-person conferences and events where we will meet and laugh and work together in person once again. Please join us and continue to contribute. The British Columbia Historical Federation has been entirely run by volunteers for 100 years, and so it is truly a community effort requiring many hands. Including yours.

Take good care,
Shannon Bettles
President, British Columbia Historical Federation

Our content creators live in all parts of the province, but *BC History* is produced in the Traditional Territory of the Coast Salish-speaking peoples.

INBOX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The Cartoons of Emily Carr
Facebook as Archive
Finding My Indigenous Family

Dear Editor,
The Winter 2021 edition of *BC History* magazine is a wonderful read. This edition holds some special interest for me. Gladys Fletcher of Ainsworth, my wife Trudy's grandmother, wrote for the *Kootenaian*, mentioned in the article about *The New Canadian* newspaper.

I very much enjoyed the article "Rassling in the Royal City," as during my high school days, 1965 to 1970, two of my instructors were teachers by day and "professional wrestlers" in the evenings. You never misbehaved in their classes.

The article by Andrea Lister, "Read All About It," covered a piece of history that occurred nearby, and I learned that relief camp 227 operated in Agassiz.

Using the digitized editions is worth the effort but searching can be a challenge. I live in Popkum and am interested in its history. The digital editions of the *Chilliwack Progress* are a great resource. However, if you search the current spelling, "Popkum," nothing is found before about 1970 when someone in Victoria decided to change the name from Popcum to Popkum. Now I find information on Popcum going back to the late 1800s.

Wonderful work by all who make this magazine possible.

Best wishes,
Mike Yusko

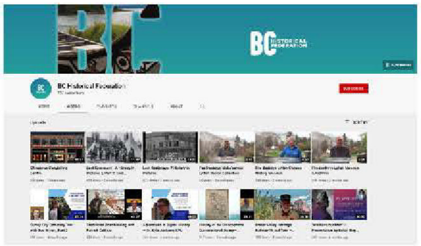
P.S.: The farmers in the Sumas Prairie really suffered with the high water but the dairy farmers did not wait for the government and took it upon themselves to save as many animals as possible. I think there were over 100 cattle trailers lined up to get the cattle away from the high water and to farms on high ground.

Dear Editor,
Thanks Greg Nesteroff and Jane Watt and editorial team for a great Winter 2021 issue of *BC History.* I liked the range and depth of articles and the encouraging of new contributors. What I especially appreciated was that this issue began with the late Ron Welwood's letter to the editor with memories of Margaret Stoneberg's contribution to the BC Historical Federation. It was a pleasure to serve with her on BCHF Council and meet her at conferences. Now it is time to praise Ron Welwood's efforts for Nelson historical projects and for the BCHF council, publications, and website, and also his role as a mentor and friend to new BCHF members. Like Margaret Stoneberg, Ron Welwood was "unique and definitely one of the many memorable Federation characters that I have encountered in over (50) years."

Jacqueline Gresko

We have many pairs of eyes combing over our proofs, and we always give it our best shot, but we missed the mark with our reproduction of the photograph on the cover of our Winter 2021 issue. It was printed in reverse—as you can see by the calendar on the wall. Here (above) is the correct orientation.

CHINATOWN'S FIRST
ATIONAL BANK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CHINATOWN STORYTELLING CENTRE
Carol Lee
in conversation with
Mark Forsythe
BC HISTORICAL FEDERATION

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We love to hear from you

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Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

Victoria crowds at the waterfront near the Japanese Tea Gardens, circa 1915. Photo: Esquimalt Municipal Archives, V986.18.8

WITHOUT A TRACE

A small but important piano

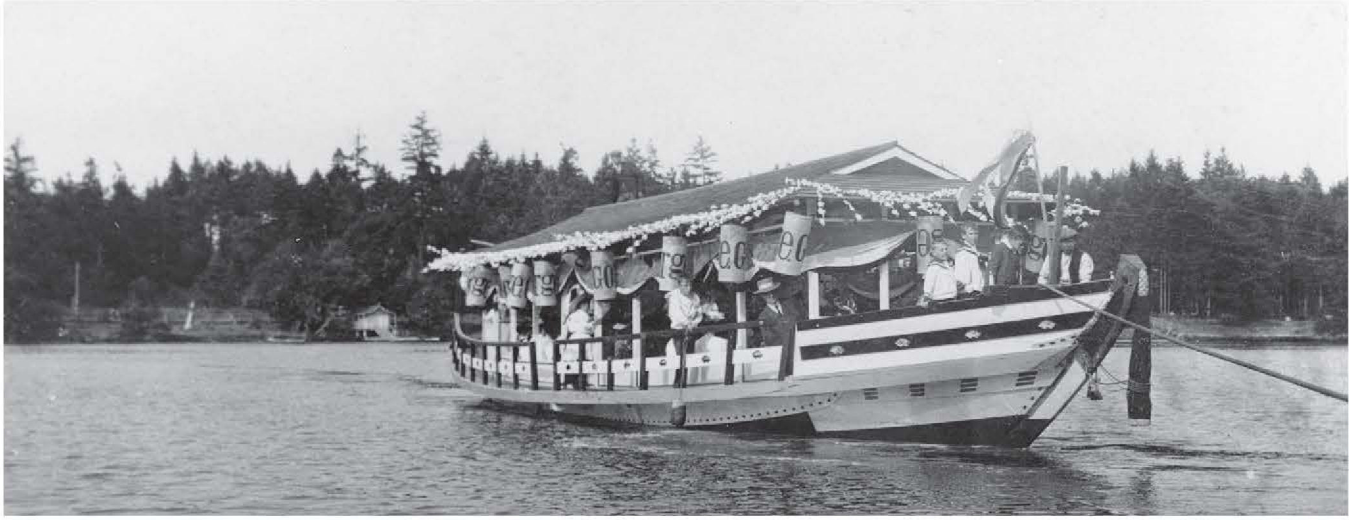
By Michael Abe

With the invention of the incandescent light bulb in the 1880s came a boom in its production and use. Victoria was no exception: It was a modern city, with many of its better-off homes lit by electricity.

Increasing construction along the Gorge Waterway led to the expansion of the streetcar network along Gorge and Craigflower Roads. The BC Electric Railway bought 20 acres [8 hectares] of land from the Hudson's Bay Company and in a matter of months cleared half of those acres to create a park at its terminus. On July 26, 1905, Tramway Gorge Park was opened to great fanfare, with "GORGE PARK" spelled out in electric candles welcoming visitors and heralding the new industrial "Electric Age." The regular summer tram service ran two cars, each with a capacity of 100 riders paying a five-cent fare [equivalent to about $1.15 in 2022]. Trams ran every 20 minutes from the main juncture of Yates and Government Streets to the Gorge Loop in the park.

Tramway Gorge Park quickly became the most popular amusement site in Victoria. Outdoor movies were projected onto a huge canvas sheet, and the park also featured a merry-go-round, a dance pavilion with a fine sprung wooden floor, a roller coaster, the Scenic Railway, and a water slide called "Shoot the Chute." In 1924 a roller rink was added. Circuses, vaudeville

This article is an updated reprint of an article that appeared on October 13, 2020, as #8 in the Landscapes of Injustice Claim Series. See their work at https://www.landscapesofinjustice.com/



Zenkichi Nishimoto's *yakata* on the Gorge at the Tea Gardens, 1912. Photo: Esquimalt Municipal Archives, V986.18.1

performances, and side shows came and went. Boating, picnics, swimming, fireworks, high diving acts, hot air balloons, and a bandstand all added to the park's vibrancy.

Japanese businessman Yoshijiro (Joe) Kishida saw an opportunity. Inspired by the 1894 California Midwinter International Exposition in San Francisco and its popular Japanese Tea Garden, he approached Albert Goward, the manager of Tramway Company, and pitched him the idea of a Japanese tea garden to increase visitor draw. Kishida, Hayato (Harry) Takata, and four other business partners raised $5,000 [equivalent to about $115,000 in 2022] and were assigned one acre [0.4 hectares] of land within the Tramway Park. They leased it for $50 [equivalent to about $1,150 in 2022] per year. Although the lease was later raised to $100 [equivalent to about $2,250 in 2022], they recouped their original investment within a few years.

Joe Kishida sent for his father, Isaburo Kishida, a garden designer employed by the Yokohama Nursery in Japan. The 65-year-old Isaburo arrived by ship on April 19, 1907. Before long, he imported plants and bonsai trees from Japan, designed Japanese-style bridges over winding streams, and installed stone lanterns. Helping with falling the trees, planting shrubs, and building the garden and ponds were Japanese sealers wintering in Victoria harbour. When the Japanese Tea Garden opened on Thursday, July 11, 1907, 786 curious holidayers were in attendance—but that number grew to the thousands by the weekend. It was a resounding success: the gardens were beautiful; the location was stunning. And Kishida and Takata had shown a knack for anticipating Victorians' sensibilities.

Harry Takata's brother, Kensuke, would soon join him in the venture, buying Harry's shares when he returned to Japan. Isaburo Kishida returned to Japan in 1910, but not before leaving a legacy of Japanese gardens in Victoria, including those at the Butchart Gardens and at Hatley Castle.

Entrepreneur Zenkichi Nishimoto, a boat builder, constructed a 40-foot-long, 10-foot-wide [12 by 3 metres] Japanese pleasure boat or *yakata* (which most Victorians called the "sampan"). The boat was berthed

Nikkei Legacy: The Story of Japanese Canadians from Settlement to Today (Toronto: NC Press, 1983)

This book is a valuable resource and one of the first to document the century-old Japanese-Canadian story. Born in 1920 and educated in Victoria, Toyo Takata was the oldest of six children to Kensuke and Misuyo Takata. From 1948 to 1952, Toyo was the editor of the English section of *The New Canadian,* the only Japanese-run publication allowed to operate in the internment camps [see issue 54.4 for more on this newspaper]. Because of this experience, and as the president of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto, he "became the unofficial historian of the vanished Japanese community of BC." It was through Toyo's research, including interviews with George Nagano, that he determined that George's father, Manzo Nagano, was the first Japanese person to settle in Canada in 1877. He was in error, however. See *BC History,* Spring 2017, "Canada's First Japanese Immigrant: Nagano or Mikuni? This discovery led to the commemoration of the Japanese Canadian Centennial in 1977, celebrated by Nikkei (person of Japanese descent) across Canada. From this Centennial arose a project to publish a pictorial history of the Japanese Canadians, *Nikkei Legacy,* which continues to be one of the most comprehensive books on the Nikkei community from first arrival to just before Redress.

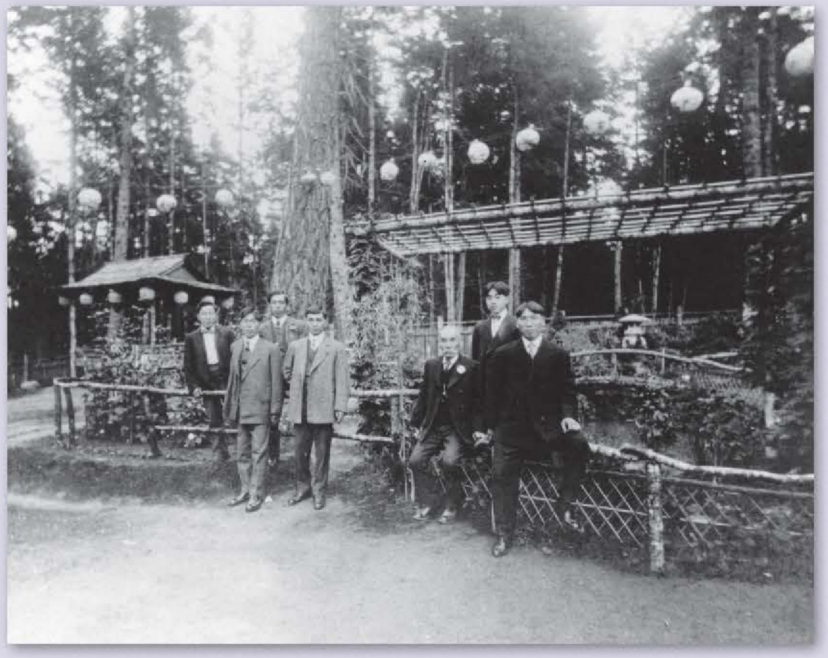
near the swimming area alongside a floating teahouse where cherry blossoms and paper lanterns trimmed the eaves. Crossing a red-lacquered bridge, one would board the vessel adorned with beaded curtains and set with tables for tea, ice cream, and "kindred refreshments." Bamboo, imitation wisteria, and banners bearing Zenkichi Nishimoto's name decorated the houseboat itself. Nishimoto ran his successful business from 1909 to 1920. For ten cents [about $2.25 today], it would take visitors up the Gorge to Craigflower Bridge and back while they enjoyed the scenery, refreshments, and entertainment from a small piano.

When Nishimoto closed his operation to focus on boat building and farming, he moved the piano to his home in the nearby Tillicum area. In 1938, when the Nishimoto family moved to Vancouver, the piano was given to the Takata family.

With federal orders to forcibly uproot Japanese Canadians in 1942, the Takatas were among the 273 men, women, and children herded on to a CPR steamship in Victoria Harbour on April 22, 1942, bound for Hastings Park in Vancouver. After five months in the detainment centre there, where they lived under unsanitary conditions, the Takatas were interned in Sandon, a silver-mining ghost town in the West Kootenay. After the war, the family resettled in Ontario.

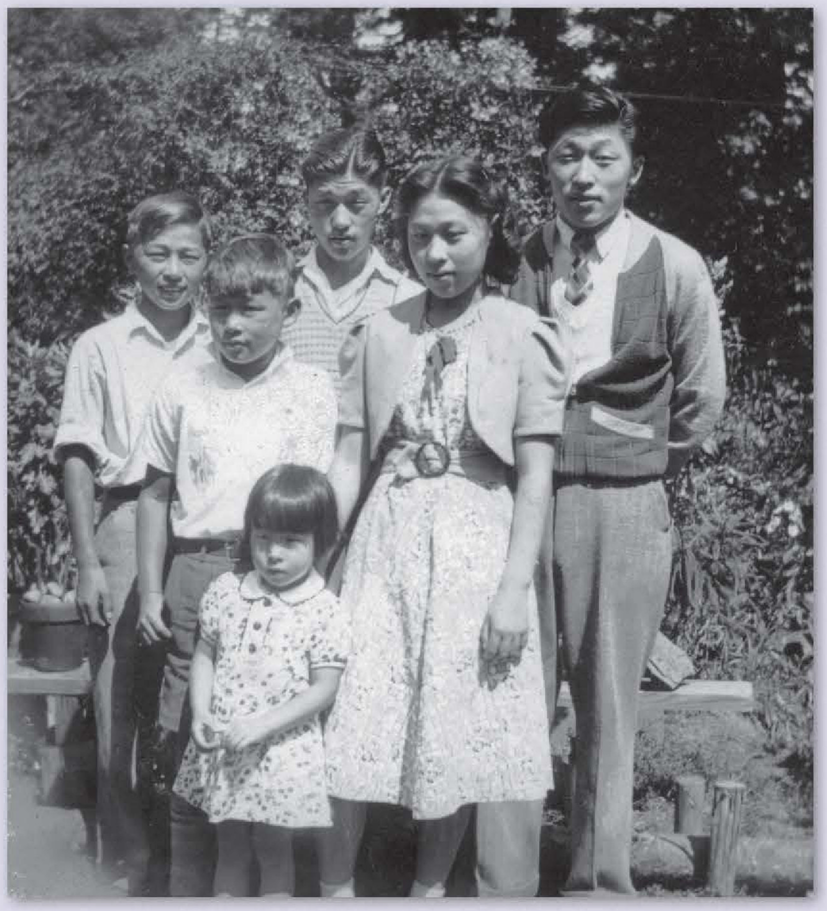
Records of correspondence from the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property to the Takata family mention the piano. "If the piano is not to be sent to Kensuke Takata, Mr. Stancil informs me that he is prepared to purchase it, provided the appraised value is within his means. In the alternative it is recommended that it be moved to auction."

After the family had moved to Toronto, Kensuke Takata's daughter Toshie wrote to the Office of the Custodian after efforts to preserve her piano from dispossession had failed. Toshie wrote several times to Mrs. Stancil between July 18 and August 1, 1945. In one letter, she writes, "I would like to know if my piano is still under your care. I need a piano very badly now that I have plenty of room to place it. If the cost



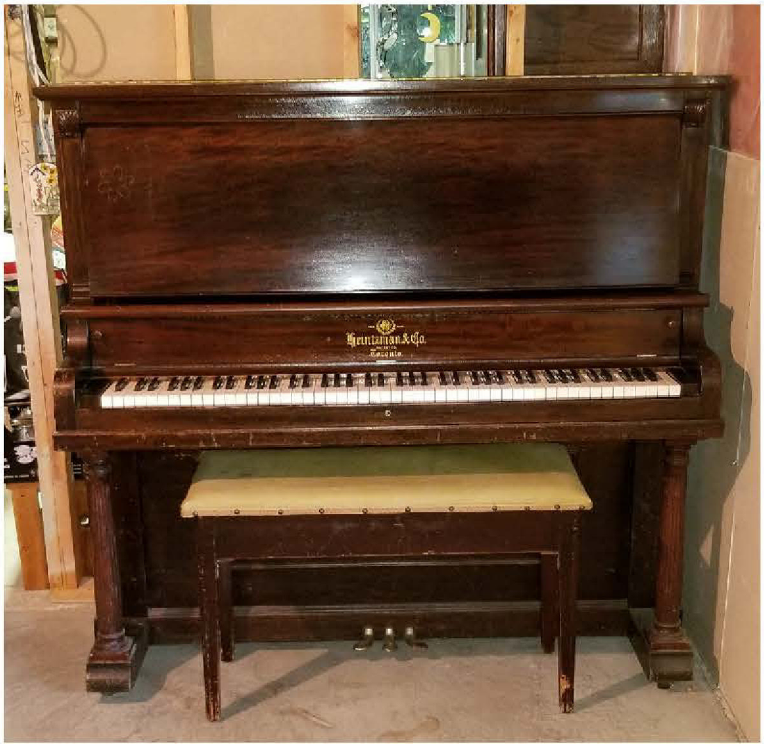
Group of Japanese men at Japanese Gardens. Back row of left group unidentified. Front row of left group L-R: Kensuke Takata, Hayato Takata. Right group L-R: Isaburo Kishida (landscape designer), Yoshijiro Kishida (his adopted son), Yoshi Jiro. September, 1907.

Photo: Esquimalt Municipal Archives V986.18.20



Takata children L-R: George, Seiji, Kenji, Toshie, and Toyo, with Marie in front, circa 1939.

Photo: Takata Family Collections



The piano that provided entertainment at the Tea Gardens from 1909–1920. Photo: Courtesy Dillon and Lisa Takata

of freight is too high it seems rather foolish to have it shipped out here. If I'm able to sell that piano for at least One Hundred Dollars, then with that much plus the cost of freight I can practically buy a piano here . . . I would appreciate it very much if you would buy it from me, much that I'd hate to sell it, but when I know of its owners it gives a different feeling." The Chattel Summary,[1] dated April 17, 1946, indicates that the piano was sold to the Stancils on August 20, 1945.

The Takata family reunited briefly in Toronto before Harry returned to Japan to take care of the family business. Kensuke's family rebuilt their lives in Toronto. Kensuke became a master of bonsai and returned to his hometown for a visit in 1979 where he died at the venerable age of 95, in the same Japanese house where he was born.

One of his sons, Toyo Takata, became a JC community historian and stayed in touch with many friends and classmates in Victoria. He wrote *Nikkei Legacy* [see sidebar on page six] and he helped build Takata Garden at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific in Victoria. His grandson, Dillon Takata, the great-grandson of Kensuke Takata, returned to Victoria where he is a doctor. He and his wife, Lisa Hansen, got married in 2016 in the Takata Garden, and they have been deeply involved in the tea house revitalization campaign since it began. The successful campaign will see the completion of the Esquimalt Gorge Pavilion with Japanese aesthetic design features in early 2022. Members of the Takata family were in attendance on October 15, 2021 for a ceremonial planting and unveiling of the Takata Cherry Forest with more than 26 trees donated by the Takata family, which included a good portion from the estate of Toshie Takata, who had passed away just a few years before.

But what became of the piano?

Shortly after the initiative for the revitalization of the Japanese Tea House in Gorge Park began, the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VNCS) received this email:

> My name is Steven Lennon and I have lived in Victoria all my life (as did my parents and grandparents). I read with interest the article in the *Times Colonist* on April 14, 2019, and believe that

Horticulture Centre of the Pacific

After Redress in September 1988, community funds were available across Canada for capital projects that served the Japanese-Canadian community. A campaign was underway in Victoria to rebuild the Japanese gardens at the Gorge, but the Takata Garden Society was frustrated by bureaucracy from the Esquimalt Parks and Recreation. (A far cry from the incredible support seen today from the municipality of Esquimalt, mayor and council, and Esquimalt parks and recreation.) In 1995, some of the funds raised were used to donate 15 *sakura* (cherry blossom trees), a plaque, and a memorial stone that commemorated the history of the gardens. The majority of the funds were used to build Takata Garden and Teahouse at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific. Begun in 1995, the Takata Garden opened in 1999 with members of the Takata family in attendance. A Zen-style viewing room was added in 2003, overlooking a small traditional-style teahouse that hosts events, tea ceremonies, and weddings.

As noted in *Gateway to Promise* by Ann-Lee and Gordon Switzer, one of the most exciting additions happened in 2008 when two of the cut-leaf maples originally located at the Japanese Tea Garden at the Gorge, by then 100 years old, were moved from their second home at the former Blair family residence on Goldstream Avenue and successfully replanted in the Japanese Garden.

Dillon Takata and Lisa Hansen were married at Takata Garden in 2016. Photo: Courtesy Dillon and Lisa Takata

> I have the piano that was at the Gardens during the War. As a child, I was told that the "caretakers" were friends with my grandparents, Ernest and Muriel Stancil. They sold it to my grandparents when the original owners at the Gardens were interned during the war.
>
> Over time it came into my possession. I have had it for 41 years while prior to this, my parents and grandparents had it in theirs. I would like to donate to the Society if there is interest in having it.

Steven's generous offer to finance the refurbishing of the piano and its donation back to the community quickly circulated through social media, and a young Japanese-Canadian musician from Ontario was inspired to compose and perform a piece of music to tell the story. Another Nikkei artist, a dancer from Vancouver, will team up with her. We look forward to seeing this performance live in the newly opened Esquimalt Gorge Pavilion in 2022.

The provenance of this piano is a wonderful symbol of the dispossession and resilience of a community.

Endnotes

1. The Canadian government confiscated the property and "chattels" (movable personal belongings such as cars, boats, furniture, tools, etc.) of Japanese Canadians in 1942. The Chattel Summary listed the seized items of the Japanese Canadians. These items were sold at auctions, often for very low prices, in Vancouver between 1943 and 1947. "The government held the money in accounts for those in the camps, paying no interest, and limited their withdrawals to $100 per month. Japanese Canadians were forced to use the funds to pay for their confinement." Greg Robinson, "Internment of Japanese Canadians," *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/internment-of-japanese-canadians

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Michael Abe is a third-generation Japanese Canadian (Nikkei Sansei), born and raised in Ontario. After spending six years in Japan, Mike and his wife, Izumi, have been living in Victoria, BC (since 1993). They have two children, Kento and Natsuki. Michael was the project manager of Landscapes of Injustice, a major research project headquartered at the Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria (UVic) that focused on the dispossession of property owned by Japanese Canadians during the 1940s. He is the past president of the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society (VNCS) and former newsletter editor. He also spearheaded the Gambare Nippon Support Japan 2011 group that raised funds to aid victims of the earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Michael is the co-chair of the VNCS Heritage Committee with daughter Natsuki, a recent history grad from UVic.

Timeline of the revitalization of the Japanese Tea House in Gorge Park

JANUARY 2017 • Capital Regional District and the Township of Esquimalt agree on an amenity-funding package. The McLoughlin Point Amenity Reserve Funds will be used for capital projects in waterfront parks and recreation facilities. Public is asked for project idea proposals for use of funds.

FEBRUARY–MAY 2018 • Public online survey of proposals, round one.

MAY–DECEMBER 2018 • Round two online survey.

NOVEMBER 2019 • Esquimalt council approves multi-purpose building for Gorge Park.

JANUARY 2020 • Detailed design phase of the project with Iredale Architecture. Construction commences shortly after.

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2022 • Anticipated completion of Esquimalt Gorge Pavilion.

APRIL 2022 • Planned grand opening with historical display wall.

Illustration: Katya Dela Cruz

The White Elephant in the Room

Anti-Asian racism in Canada

By Henry Yu

I have been thinking a lot about the surge in anti-Asian assaults and hate crimes lately. Partly it's because, as a historian, I am asked regularly to explain the history of anti-Asian racism and how it can help us analyze what is happening now. The connection between our past and present is challenging, however, for many people to fully grasp.

I have found that people have difficulty talking about, let alone understanding, the legacies of historical anti-Asian racism, and so I thought it might be useful to talk about it by thinking about elephants. Not real elephants, but as a figure of speech. For example, in English we speak of "the elephant in the room," and most readers will be familiar with the parable about the "blind men and the elephant."

I prefer the term "white supremacy" to "racism." Why? For many people, white supremacy makes us think of the Ku Klux Klan and Nazis and angry mobs with flaming torches. Surely Canadians are not those people. We are a polite people, much better than that. And yet . . . sheet music for the popular song "White Canada Forever" was a bestseller in the early twentieth century. And the political slogan "A White Man's Province" helped a candidate win election as premier of BC. There was an organized Ku Klux Klan in the tony Vancouver neighbourhood of Shaughnessy in the 1920s. Those are clearly examples of white supremacy. So why would we continue to use the term racism rather than white supremacy?

The idiomatic saying "the elephant in the room" refers to a subject that people are avoiding in a discussion, and this subject is actually the most important one. Someone might say, "Shouldn't we deal with the elephant in the room?" and everyone else will know that this is the signal to talk about the real issue, the one they've been skirting. Like an actual elephant sitting

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in the room, the issue is too obvious not to notice, but people are too uncomfortable to discuss it.

White supremacy is Canada's elephant in the room

Many Canadians deny that there is racism in Canada, or they assert that there *used* to be racism but it's no longer here, among us. Others will admit that there was a history of racism but find it very uncomfortable to talk about the connection between white supremacy and racism. Without dealing with white supremacy, racism makes no sense.

> The Devil's greatest trick, it is said, is convincing people that he doesn't exist.

Those of us who feel the effects of anti-Asian racism understand that the generic category of "Asian" that defines us as targets is not a definition within our control. It does not matter if you or your ancestors come from a specific place called China or Vietnam or Pakistan rather than a generic place called "Asia" or the "Orient." The process of racialization defines you by making you a target. It does not matter if you have grown up here and only speak English. It does not matter if you have a fancy haircut and wear expensive clothes. You can still be attacked as an Asian and scapegoated for unaffordable housing, money laundering, or COVID-19.

Racism describes the victims and targets of white supremacy—as in "anti-Asian racism" or "anti-Black racism" or "anti-Indigenous racism"—by switching the focus from the cause (white supremacy) to the effect (racism). This switch works in the same way as denying that the sexual assault of women is one of the effects of patriarchy, which is the root cause.

The various kinds of racism that are the product of white supremacy target people differently: anti-Black racism is different from anti-Asian racism is different from the ongoing colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples—but they serve a common cause. They lump people together into categories called "races" that define the racialized as the problem, and at the same time, they benefit the people who don't have a racial category, and who are, therefore, not the problem.

Indeed, one of the benefits of the politics of white supremacy is the magical alchemy of creating categories that everyone else, except yourself, belongs to. *They* are racialized, but you are not. At least you get to believe and act as if you are not. The "visible minority" is defined by those who get to be "invisible," that is, those who are "normal" Canadians to which this nation belongs and for whom it was built.

Embedding white supremacy into our political and social institutions during the first century of our history has shaped our foundational beliefs about who belongs in Canada and who doesn't, about who is deserving of wealth and comfort, and who owns the land we live on. The greatest legacy of the history of white supremacy in Canada is that it was so successful in defining every aspect of law and society for the first 100 years of Canada's existence. In the 1960s, new laws made racial discrimination illegal, but the everyday practices of white supremacy were normalized and entrenched. Many believed that just saying that racism was eliminated could make it true. Yet it remained, built upon the hierarchy of white supremacy, and it continues to define who deserves to have more and who deserves to have less.

The removal of overt racist language from law and policy makes it, in fact, more difficult to point out the continuing effects of white supremacy. Announcing the end of explicit racism with the removal of overtly racist laws did not serve to end the inequities that had been built over a century, but it did erase them from sight.

The blind men and the elephant

White supremacy, around which Canada was built for more than 100 years, continues to be the elephant in the room when we need to discuss the causes and effects of racism. We might avoid using the term because some people feel uncomfortable, but not seeing it, naming it, means that we are always "shocked" or "surprised" when we hear about a racist incident. This feeling of surprise, as if racism is abnormal and suddenly coming out of nowhere, is the product of white supremacy. Indeed, it is one of the most effective tools of white supremacy ever created in Canada. It works to silence and blind us to the elephant's work.

And so, when you feel something isn't quite right—for instance, when you are passed over for a promotion, even though the person who used to report to you (and whom you helped train) is not as deserving as you for promotion, but they are white and you are not, you wonder, "Is it just me?" Or when you are the only non-white person in the room and a decision is being made and no one seems to have thought about what it might mean for people who might not enjoy the luck of being white, you wonder, "Should I say something?" Or when you see an elderly woman spit on or physically attacked for being "Asian," you wonder, "Should I be surprised?"

If you have experienced something like these examples and wondered if it was racism, then you are like one of the characters in the parable about the "blind men and the elephant." The story, popularized in English through translations of the Sufi poet Omar Khayyam, tells of a group of blind men each feeling different parts of an elephant. They can each describe what they feel, and each of them think that what they have felt is a distinct animal. But, of course, they are limited by their own perspectives and don't realize that there is actually an elephant in the room. If you have ever wondered if what happened to you is happening only to you, it is because you can feel only one part of the elephant. If you, or anyone you know, ever felt surprised or shocked to hear about an incident of racism in Canada, you have been blinded so that you cannot see the elephant in the room.

This is the greatest trick that a long history of white supremacy in Canada has wrought: the elephant in the room is invisible. You don't see it even when one of the legs is crushing you or someone you love. Another leg may be crushing someone who is Black. Yet another leg is crushing someone who is Indigenous. But you can barely understand why you feel this weight on your back. You have been blinded to the huge elephant in the room, the one that stands on top of some of us but not others.

My investment in belonging will not save me from racism. And that has been difficult to process for many, especially those who must now question what they had to give up in order to earn this belonging.

Many Asians, as well as others considered non-white in Canada, have enjoyed socio-economic success. We can and do clamour for belonging in Canada. For decades we have argued against racial exclusion by asserting that we also deserve to have a piece of the pie that has been denied us. We have fought and died for inclusion. We have remade ourselves in order to be worthy of belonging. We can remove as many indicators of our non-belonging as possible—stop speaking the non-English language of our mothers, stop eating food that our grandparents love, change our names to something easier to pronounce in English. We can sacrifice and work extra hard to go to the right school, earn the best degree, work at the best job. We can invest in success and get the nice house in the good neighbourhood and the right school for our kids. We can invest in success as a tool for getting more of what we want. But our success can be weaponized against us.

When anti-Asian agitators complained about Chinese and Japanese people in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they may have stated that Asians were inferior, but it was the economic success and the "hardworking" character of Asians that threatened them. The looting of Chinese-Canadian and Japanese-Canadian stores in the Vancouver race riot of 1907 was born of an economic resentment that scapegoated Asians. The dispossession of Japanese Canadians between 1942 and 1949 was more about their pre-war successes in fishing, logging, farming, and business than any wartime threat. We should never forget that Japanese Canadians were exiled from BC for longer after the end of the Second World War than during the war, when they were supposedly a threat. The paradox of anti-Asian racism is that our very investments in success are used as weapons against us. Our belonging is provisional. If many of our children are in a classroom, is that classroom "too Asian"? If many of us move into a neighbourhood, when does it become "too Asian"? Our presence is not normal in Canada; our absence is.

One of the reasons that the surge in anti-Asian violence this last year has had such a visceral impact for many "Asian" Canadians is that these investments in success—and the sacrifices and losses that they often entailed—have come into question. My great job and big house and fancy clothes will not save me from being yelled at or spit on or shoved. My investment in belonging will not save me from racism. And that has been difficult to process for many, especially those who must now question what they had to give up in order to earn this belonging. What if going to the right school and studying the right subjects meant the loss of your ability to speak to your grandmother in her own language? What if your drive to leave your family origins behind meant not being able to teach your own kids about ancestors from far away? What if the cost of success is not knowing who you really are?

After a long, terrible year of anti-Asian racism, it might seem like a victory to just walk the streets without fear, to not worry about your mother being shoved on the sidewalk or your grandparents being spit on while food shopping. We might want to double down on our investments in success, buy some extra security with a little more education, a bigger dose of status and belonging in Canada. But what are we buying into when we want more of the pie?

The crushing cost to Canada of our white elephant

Anti-Asian racism in Canada has been built around scapegoating and exclusion. We are perpetually foreign. We do not belong. When things go wrong, it is always our fault. We might be tempted to simply argue for a better belonging, for working hard and never complaining so that we are seen to deserve our fair share. We have contributed to Canada. We helped build the railroad! We deserve to belong. But in fighting for belonging, for our piece of the pie, we risk mistaking the elephant's leg for the elephant itself.

We also use the term "white elephant" to talk about a shining gift that costs so much to take care of that it hampers us from doing things that are actually more important—for example, the donation of a fancy museum building that goes so far over budget that there isn't enough money to run the museum programs. The term comes from the tale of the clever Siamese kings who would give their enemies the gift of a sacred white elephant, seemingly a gift of great value. But because the elephant could not be used for work and yet needed to be pampered and taken care of as a sacred animal, the ongoing cost of keeping the gift would bankrupt the recipient.

In British Columbia, we live on the unceded territory of Indigenous peoples who were here long before us. For all of us whose ancestors immigrated to Canada over the last few centuries, we live as uninvited guests on the traditional and ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples who have been here since time immemorial. This is their house. We live in the fancy rooms stolen from them after relegating their communities to the tiny rooms that we call Reserves. The foundational *Indian Act of 1876*, passed by Parliament soon after Confederation, unilaterally legalized this system of colonial dispossession, and we continue to live and thrive using the fenced goods of this original act of theft. This is the white elephant that Canada gifted all of us. This was the birthing of the elephant in the room.

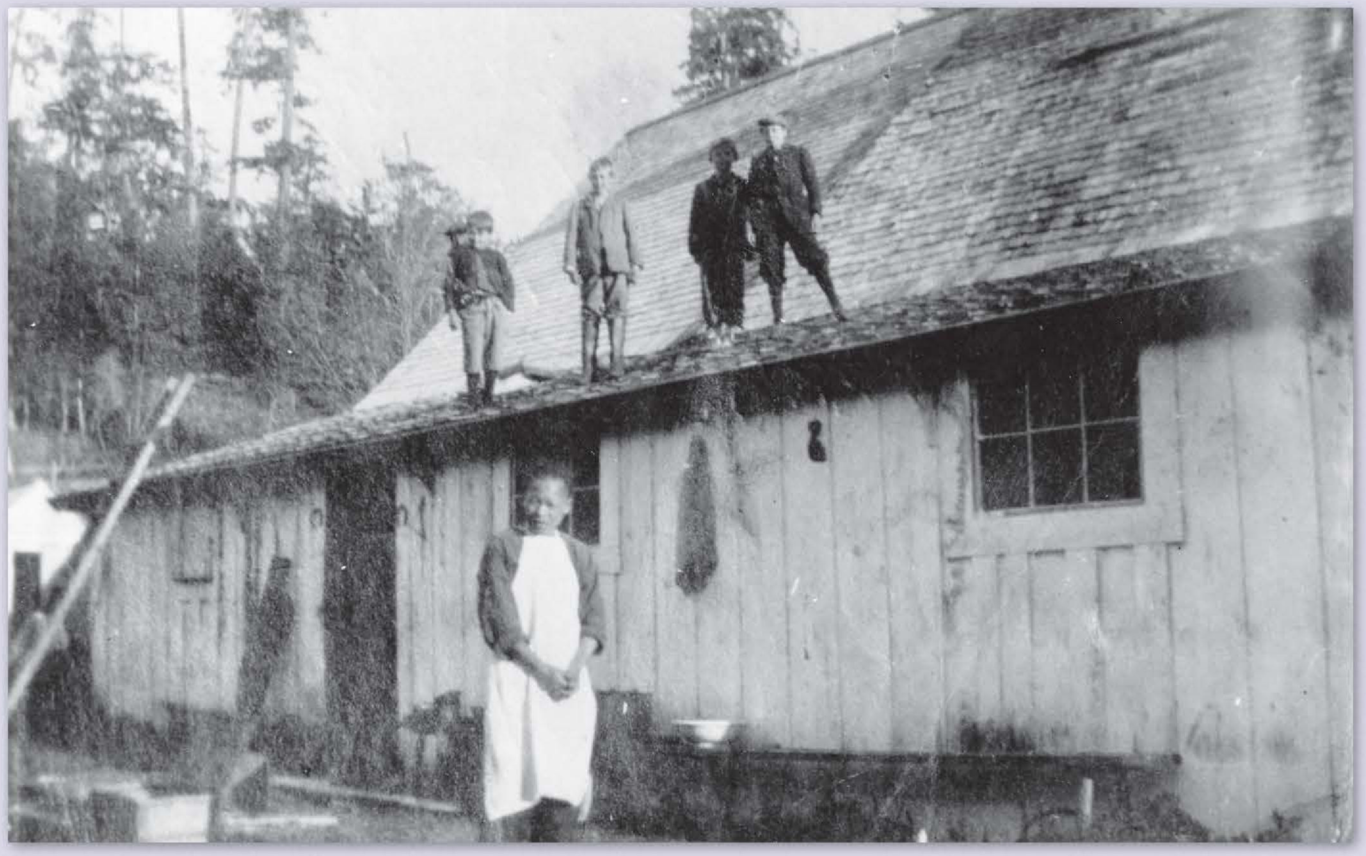
If we understand the history of anti-Asian racism only as the series of exclusionary and discriminatory laws targeting Chinese people and other Asians, we will continue to be blind to the elephant and see just one of its legs. Disenfranchisement, the inability to testify or represent yourself in court, the economic restrictions designed to eliminate livelihoods, the immigration exclusions designed to keep Asians out of Canada, the denial of access to "pre-empted" land taken from Indigenous peoples and given to white settlers—these are the elephant's legs trying to crush Asians. They are also the legacy of acts of denial and exclusion that we should be careful to consider when we try to understand the elephant in the room that stands astride us all.

White supremacy is the gift that keeps on giving, even after the elephant played the magical trick of disappearing from the room. But blindly chopping off one leg of the elephant is not enough. We must be prepared to commit to getting rid of the whole elephant and not just the part of it that we can feel and see.

White elephants are a costly, debilitating gift. For Canada, the white elephant of white supremacy has meant extolling ideals that we do not consistently practise, ideas that reveal us as hypocritical and blind to our own sins, that expose us to being mocked as smug and self-delusional. If we keep feeding the white elephant in the room, if we continue to keep it alive despite those who are crushed under its weight, we will continue to pay the costs. If those who were formerly treated as "Orientals" want to belong by becoming fully "Canadian," we need to be careful that we do not clamour merely for our own piece of belonging in Canada. If we want to end anti-Asian racism, then we must not be blind to the white elephant in the room; crushing Asians is only one of its many tricks.

If we believe in aspiring to live in a just and inclusive society, then justice for some cannot be at the cost of justice for all. That means finding alliance with others being crushed by the same elephant. It means rejecting tactics that divide and rule by offering shiny baubles to one at the cost of ignoring the pain of another. We must be prepared to commit to getting rid of the whole elephant and not just the part of it that we can feel and see. Otherwise the elephant will survive to surprise us again in the future.

Professor Henry Yu was born in Vancouver, and grew up in Vancouver and on Vancouver Island. He received his BA in Honours History from UBC and an MA and PhD in History from Princeton University. After teaching at UCLA for a decade, Yu returned to UBC. His book, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford University Press, 2001) won the Norris and Carol Hundley Prize as the Most Distinguished Book of 2001, and he is currently working on a book entitled *How Tiger Woods Lost His Stripes: Finding Ourselves in History*. Currently, he is the director of the Initiative for Student Teaching and Research on Chinese Canadians (INSTRCC) and the principal of St. John's College at UBC, and a board member of the Chinese Canadian Historical Society of British Columbia (CCHSBC) and the Chinese Canadian Museum of BC.



The original Grouse Nest, summer home to the Gillespie family. East Sooke, circa 1889. Photo: Sooke Region Museum, SRHS#3740

GROUSE NEST

The most mysterious house in Sooke

By Paul G. Chamberlain

The loggers who first cut down the trees on the waterfront lot at Atwater Landing in East Sooke over one hundred years ago had no idea that they were laying the foundation of a house that would one day become a legend. But in less than a century the property known as the Grouse Nest went from being a summer cottage and popular resort to an exclusive waterfront retreat whose denizens included the daughter of the Duchess of Mecklenburg, Hollywood titans like John Wayne, and a former Egyptian arms dealer who turned the residence into an exclusive hunting and fishing lodge for the rich and famous. Many questions about the Grouse Nest, however, remain unanswered. Which is perhaps why local historian Elida Peers calls it "the most mysterious house in the neighbourhood."[1]

The Grouse Nest was originally built as a summer cottage near the turn of the last century by a successful financier from Victoria named George Gillespie. Although the Gillespies spent most of the year in Victoria at Highwood, their family residence on Moss Street, they enjoyed entertaining friends at the Grouse Nest every summer in Sooke. In 1910 their son Alexander took up residence at Glenairley, a nearby farmhouse on the south shore of the Sooke Basin.[2] Alexander was born in 1880 and became a respected land surveyor, mapping the province from Vancouver Island to the Alaska border.

In 1929, a gravel road was built to connect the Grouse Nest with the Sooke Road, and it was named Gillespie Road. During the Great Depression, the Grouse Nest was sold to the Knight family. In 1939, Roderick Knight bought the property from his father, but just as he took possession, the Second World War broke out. Roderick had a passion for sailing and a great love of the sea, so it comes as no surprise that he enlisted in the Navy. When he came home from the war, he transformed the Grouse Nest into a popular local resort. Cards, darts, ping-pong, tennis, fishing, and rowing were some of the activities offered to guests, and in the long summer evenings there was dancing in Sooke or Colwood.

Tragically, a fire destroyed the house in 1950 when embers from a wood stove ignited the timbers. This might have been the end of the Grouse Nest, but Roderick Knight was determined to rebuild, so he set up his own sawmill on the property, rebuilt the home, and reopened the resort in 1953. In 1963, Roderick put the resort up for sale, and it was at this time that a mysterious man from Switzerland began to take interest in the property.[3]

Hassan Sayed Kamil was born in the canton of Bern in 1918 to an Egyptian father and a Swiss mother. He worked for the Swiss firm Oerlikon, which was known, among other things, for its involvement in the international arms trade.[4] In the mid-1950s, Kamil married the beautiful Duchess Helene of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a descendent of the Grand Ducal House of Pomerania with ancestral links to the Queen of England.[5] Kamil was at the top of his game. But what happened next was worthy of a James Bond film.

In the late 1950s, Egypt was seeking to rearm itself, and President Gamal Abdul Nasser turned to an unlikely source—Germany. A number of fugitives from the former Wehrmacht had been living in Egypt since the days of King Farouk, but by 1958 Nasser had secretly begun to lay the foundation of a ballistic missile program, and he wanted to entice some of Hitler's former rocket scientists to Cairo to work on his ambitious project.[6] Kamil was an experienced international arms dealer, and his Egyptian heritage made him an ideal advisor for President Nasser. The Shadowman of Zurich, as Kamil came to be known, set up two front companies in Switzerland and then secretly began to recruit personnel.

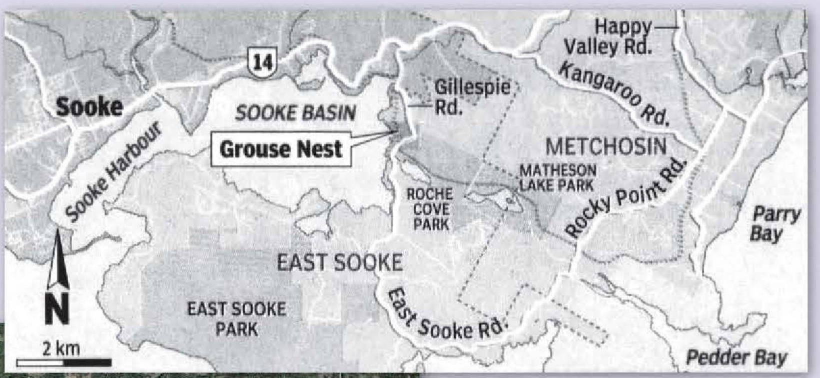
Not surprisingly, Nasser's activities did not go unnoticed by Egypt's neighbours. Israel authorized Operation Damocles, a counter-intelligence program, and on July 27, 1962, Mossad struck its first blow: barely a week after the launch of Egypt's first rockets, Kamil charted a plane to fly from the Baltic resort of Sylt to Dusseldorf for a family christening. The aircraft never arrived. It exploded near Riesenbeck, Germany, killing Kamil's wife and the pilot.[7] This was a narrow escape for the Shadowman of Zurich, who had decided at the last minute not to accompany the Duchess.

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer finally acknowledged Israel's concerns, and the German government decided to put pressure on its scientists to return home.[8] By this time, however, Kamil was no longer living in Switzerland: anxious to keep a low profile, he had quietly collapsed both his front companies, and he took up residence in a secluded corner of Vancouver Island. The legend of the Grouse Nest was about to turn a new page.

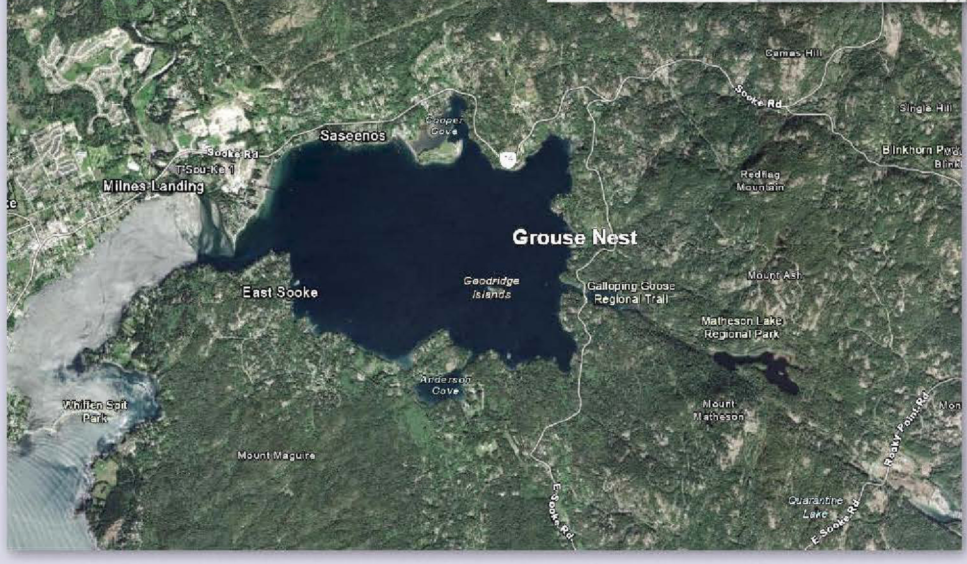
In 1963, residents of Sooke learned that Roderick Knight had sold the Grouse Nest to a mysterious company. Although Victoria lawyer Louis Lindholm was listed as the company's president, Kamil was the director of the Swiss holding company that had quietly financed the transaction.[9] Given the controversy

George Gillespie with his wife and sons travel to their summer home (Sooke Road, 1890).

Photo: Sooke Region Museum, SRHS#5760


Happy Valley Rd.
14
Kangaroo Rd.
Gillespie Rd.
Sooke
SOOKE BASIN
Grouse Nest
METCHOSIN
Sooke Harbour
MATHESON LAKE PARK
ROCHE COVE PARK
Rocky Point Rd.
Parry Bay
N
EAST SOOKE
EAST SOOKE PARK
East Sooke Rd.
2 km
Pedder Bay

Newspaper map showing the Grouse Nest.
Printed in the *Times Colonist* on September 7, 2005.


Camas Hill
Sooke Rd
Single Hill
Cooper Cove
Saseenos
Sooke Rd
T'Sou-ke 1
Blinkhorn
Milnes Landing
Redflag Mountain
Grouse Nest
East Sooke
Goodridge Islands
Galloping Goose Regional Trail
Mount Ash
Matheson Lake Regional Park
Anderson Cove
Whiffen Spit Park
Mount Matheson
Rocky Point Rd
Mount Maguire
E Sooke Rd
Quarantine Lake
E Sooke Rd

Modern map showing the location of the Grouse Nest.
Created with ArcGIS Online.

swirling around him, it might be assumed that the Shadowman of Zurich wanted to keep a low profile, but Kamil had big plans. He wanted to expand the property to include a salmon fishing lodge, a private deer hunting preserve, and a seaplane base to attract wealthy clients from across North America.[10] No expense was spared. In 1964, seven luxury cabins were added to the Grouse Nest, and chefs from the top hotels in Europe were hired to work in the kitchen. Lindholm enthusiastically told the press that the Grouse Nest "will rank along with . . . Butchart Gardens, and Victorians will take great pride in it."[11]

Before long there were rumours that actor John Wayne dropped by for a visit and that Lorne Greene also showed up. Some even claimed to have seen members of the famed Rat Pack at the Grouse Nest, and salacious stories of women guests who were dripping with jewels only fuelled local gossip.[12]

Despite its bling, Grouse Nest Resorts Ltd. couldn't make enough money to fuel Kamil's dreams. Eventually he decided to close the resort and turn it into his private residence. By now Kamil was married to his third wife, Leonora Gross. It appears that Kamil had reinvented himself once more; this time as a country squire living in the wilds of British Columbia.

But the debts just kept piling up. In 1970, Kamil sold 1,704 acres [6.9 square kilometres] of the Grouse Nest to the Capital Regional District (CRD) for $520,000 [$3.6 million in 2022 values]; this land later became part of East Sooke Park.[13] Over the next few years, Kamil made numerous attempts to develop the adjacent property into a residential subdivision. Unfortunately, it was fraught with challenges. There were problems involving road rights-of-way, lot sizes, water availability, septic tanks, and privacy; moreover, Kamil's ambitious plans irritated some powerful people in the community. Years of wrangling with the CRD went nowhere, and by 1979 the Grouse Nest fell into receivership after Kamil defaulted on a $2.5 million loan [$8.8 million in 2022 values] secured by Laurel Properties Ltd. of Vancouver.[14] There was a court battle and, in the end, the Kamils were evicted. It was a humiliating blow to a man who had invested so much of his money in a dream that promoters had once boasted would rival the island's famed Butchart Gardens.

Laurel Properties sold the remaining 560 acres [2.26 square kilometres] of waterfront property. There was a last-minute attempt to promote a luxury housing complex and a marina, but this project was soon abandoned. In 1985, the property was subdivided into five parcels of land and auctioned off. The last parcel, containing the Grouse Nest, was bought for $750,000 [$1.7 million

John Wayne fishing salmon in Campbell River. Photographed on his boat, *Wild Goose.*

Photo: Campbell River Museum, MC 88-24b7f70

in 2022 values] by the Tchividjian family, rumoured to have ties to American TV evangelist Billy Graham.[15]

After his eviction from East Sooke, Kamil took up residence at 1461 Merritt Place in Victoria. He was now trying to open a goldmine;[16] in 1982 he funded a pilot plant to recover gold from a placer deposit near Point Renfrew under a company called Armside Mining Ltd., but by the next year Kamil had abandoned the project.[17] This is the last we hear of the Shadowman of Zurich. He died quietly in Sidney on September 19, 1991, aged 72.

The history of the Grouse Nest does not end here. We know that the property changed hands again in 2005, and the new owners, Mike Ryan of California and his associate Kurt Bohn, a Canadian, proposed yet another residential plan with 850–950 units and a 300-berth marina.[18] It didn't fly.

In 2016, the property was once more offered for sale. Listed as a 15,000-square-foot [1,394 square metres] lodge situated on a spectacular oceanfront estate, encompassing approximately 80 acres [0.32 square kilometres] of property with old-growth forest and meandering creeks, the asking price was $15 million [$16.6 in 2022 values].[19] It did not sell. By 2018 the price had dropped to $6.98 million [$7.3 today] but this did not include the costs of adding access to water and sewer services and upgrading the buildings.[20]

Nothing more was heard about the Grouse Nest for three years. Then, in the summer of 2021, a new buyer was finally found. The Grouse Nest has been purchased by Brian and Sharon Holowaychuk, owners of Clear Sky Developments, who have announced their intention to give the residence a facelift, establish a resort, and subdivide the adjoining land.[21] If Brian and Sharon Holowaychuk's vision is realized, the Grouse Nest may soon have a beautiful future.

Paul G. Chamberlain is a lecturer in historical geography at the University of Victoria. His primary interest is Middle East studies, but he has also done research on Victoria's architectural history and is the author of *Victoria's Castles: A Brief History of Lovers, Madmen, Millionaires and Ghosts on Canada's Imperial Margins.*

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18. Louise Dickson, "Grouse Nest Unveils Ambitious Plans," *Times Colonist* (July 26, 2007), B2.
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20. D. Gibson, "Mysterious East Sooke Grouse Nest for Sale," *Times Colonist* (June 27, 2018), A6.
21. Brian Holowaychuk, personal communication with the author, September 15, 2021.

Lheidli T'enneh community participants, (L-R: Robert Frederick, Willie John) photographed in 2012 during the excavation of a site on the Nechako and Fraser Rivers that dates back 9,000–10,600 years. Photo: Archer CRM

Unearthing Prince George's History

By Alyssa Leier

In 1952 renowned archaeologist Charles Borden remarked that the Interior Plateau of Northern British Columbia was archaeologically one of the least known regions in North America. This remains just as true today. Until 2012, archaeologists believed that the area, the traditional and unceded territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, specifically Prince George, was occupied only in the last 4,000 years.

In 2012 an archaeological site of significant cultural and scientific significance was partially excavated. Evidence from this excavation proved that the area had been occupied at least 5,000 years earlier than previously thought. Radiocarbon dating suggests Indigenous people have occupied this territory for at least 9,000–10,600 years.

The site is relatively close to the current confluence of the Nechako and Fraser Rivers, four kilometres southwest on a large paleochannel of the Nechako River bisected by a paleochannel of the Fraser River. This site is the first to significantly shed light on the earliest occupation of the north-central Interior of BC and has proven what local Indigenous knowledge-holders and oral histories have been saying all along—in this place, for thousands of years, Indigenous people have met the challenges of their environment and followed the rhythms of the seasons. The partial excavation of this site brought together local Indigenous knowledge-holders and archaeologists through partnership and collaboration, allowing for a much deeper understanding.

Although the site covers only 2.75 acres [0.1 square

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kilometres], it includes 57 cultural depressions and a high-density and deeply buried cultural deposit. These depressions and artifacts provide evidence of repeated use over thousands of years. Even though less than two per cent of the site was excavated, the complete assemblage of artifacts comprises 31,671 specimens, including 45 examples of projectile points and numerous simple and expedient tools from ready-to-hand materials. Evidence examined also indicates that the site was repeatedly occupied over the course of at least 1,000 years until flooding made it uninhabitable, and then, as water once again receded, over the past 500 years.

There are likely many more sites within this area that have not been found because of low archaeological visibility. Even more have been lost due to destruction by natural occurrences and/or human activities and development. This specific site would have originally been much larger if not for natural events and human development.

These excavations have had significant implications regarding what we currently understand about the cultural material, subsistence, and migration of the earliest inhabitants of British Columbia. The results have also prompted a re-evaluation of previously accepted timelines for glacial retreat along the Fraser basin on the Interior Plateau.

Further in-depth analysis of the recovered material should provide us with a more comprehensive picture of what life was like for inhabitants of the northern Interior over the past 10,000 years. Conversations are underway at The Exploration Place on how we can work with ethnobotanists and archaeologists using site samples to do residue analysis and soil sampling to learn more about what was growing, harvested, and eaten. X-ray fluorescence analysis on obsidian recovered at the site will teach us about trade and migration patterns.

Although it is of particular interest and significance, it is important to note that currently, there are 46 recorded archaeological sites within the municipality of Prince George and another 36 recorded within five kilometres of the city—and there are over 2,200 recorded sites within 100 kilometres of city limits. This leaves me to wonder how many more have yet to be discovered and how we can learn from these sites to give a more complete picture of what life was like in this place we call home.

Alyssa Leier lives on the unceded and traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation with her family in Prince George, BC. She is the curator at The Exploration Place.

Lheidli T'enneh archaeologist Elissa Gagnon (front) and archaeologist Amanda Bouchler (back) working for Archer CRM in an excavation unit on the site.

Photo: Archer CRM

Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra at the opening of *We Are Hockey,* an exhibit at the Sikh Heritage Museum National Historic Site, Gur Sikh Temple, 2019.

Photo: South Asian Studies Institute Collection

Being an Activist Historian

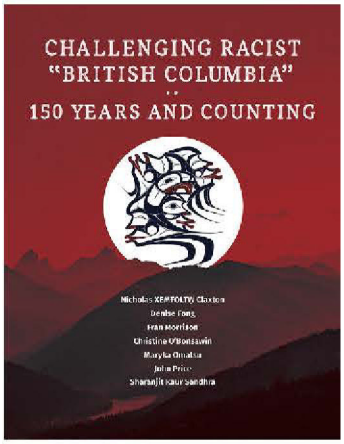
By Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra

I am a 37-year-old PhD candidate in the department of history at UBC, and a sessional faculty member in the department of history at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), which means I'm in a contract-based, impermanent, and precarious teaching position. I am co-chair of the Race and Antiracism Network at UFV and coordinator of the South Asian Studies Institute at UFV. I am also mother to a 10-year-old and a 12-year-old. I share these identities with you because they shape the kind of person, historian, and educator I am. I call myself an activist historian because I am shaping the future for my sons so they don't have to experience the same hurdles I have been through and continue to see around me, including not seeing themselves reflected in the study of history. I refuse to let my boys be educated in a world where they don't see themselves in the content of history.

I am honoured to be writing this piece for *BC History* magazine as the BC Historical Federation celebrates its centenary. *BC History* doesn't work through performative gestures but through meaningful engagement with BC's varied histories in all their complexities, diversities, equities, and creativities. In this important year for the publication, they are actively engaging with the theme of activism and the changing face of the discipline of history.

I therefore begin by acknowledging that I am writing from the unceded, ancestral, and ongoing territories of the Sto:lo peoples, the people of the river. Lately we have seen that settler-colonial infrastructures—that is, the farms—are struggling to revert to their original form—a lake—through the sheer force of Mother Earth. I speak, of course, about the flooding of the Sumas area in the Fraser Valley, where I have lived for more than 30 years. I see this event as a reminder that we need to listen to Indigenous methodologies and practices as well as to calls to action from land defenders in this climate emergency.

I am here to share my journey over the past few years and provide you with some insight and motivation to become an activist historian yourself. I want to tell you about the challenges those of us who identify as racialized historians face and to recentre activism as a worthwhile practice. I've seen the word "activism" used to mean something to be feared or co-opted by privileged white people. When I use the word "white," as a woman of colour, I mean it as a purposeful reminder that we need to break down systems of white supremacy within the discipline of history. I am aware that simply by virtue of who I am, my use of the word "white" is hyper-politicized.



Challenging Racist "British Columbia" — 150 Years and Counting

But this isn't meant to make you feel guilt or shame; it's a call to action for you to be a part of the dismantling of white supremacy. Your response to the word can tell you how ready you may be to heed the call. My use of the word "white" is informed by the understanding that Black and Indigenous scholars and activists have been fighting systems of colonial white supremacy for centuries.

The racist foundations of history

To understand what it means to be an activist historian is to first question the very foundations of the discipline. The project of colonialism around the world—including in Canada, in BC—was justified through what is called "scientific racism." The term has been defined as "a history of pseudoscientific methods 'proving' white biological superiority and flawed social studies used to show 'inherent' racial characteristics [that] still influence society today."[1]

The discipline of history, in other words, is not innocent in terms of how it chooses to cite certain scholars but completely relegate others to the margins. The discipline is implicated in the drawing of the "color line," as pointed out by the brilliant Black thinker W.E.B. Du Bois.[2] The term "was originally used as a reference to the racial segregation that existed in the United States after the abolition of slavery. An article by Frederick Douglass that was titled "The Color Line" was published in the *North American Review* in 1881. The phrase gained fame after Du Bois's repeated use of it in his 1903 book *The Souls of Black Folk.*

Becoming an activist historian

To be an activist historian is, in part, to teach the histories of enslaved and colonized people as central to the discipline. I have come to understand this is why, during one of my PhD committee meetings, I reflected on scholars such as Aime Cesaire (and many others; see sidebar on page 23) and wondered, "Why do they speak to me in ways that I have not been spoken to throughout my previous historical training?" The response from one of my committee members was, "Sharn, it's because they don't speak in the language of the colonizer."

To be an activist historian is to understand the systems that Black, Indigenous, and racialized scholars are trying to alter and to resist the discipline that puts Hegel on a pedestal. To teach against the grain of colonialism, empire, and violence is an act of resistance.

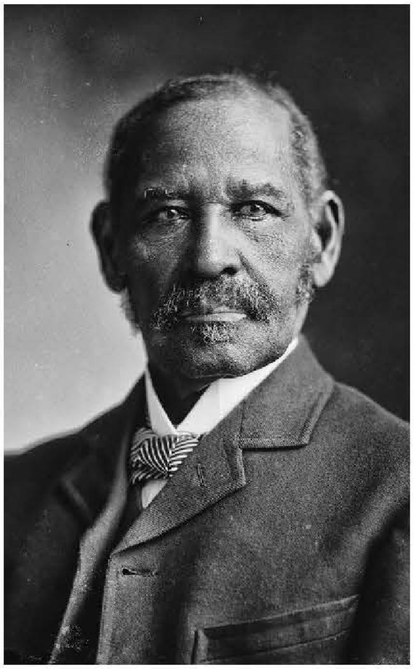
Hegel and History

Let me give you one example of how and why the discipline of history is not innocent. Many traditional historians believe that the writings of German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel are foundational to the discipline of history. Hegel himself was influenced by contemporary and earlier thinkers, such as Christoph Meiners. According to Meiners, "one of the most important characteristics of tribes and peoples is beauty or ugliness." Meiners divided humankind into two categories: the "beautiful White race" and the "ugly Black race."[3] The "ugly races" he saw as inferior, immoral, and animal-like. Scientific racism was an essential element of colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade,[4] and the way it became legitimized within history was perpetuated throughout the nineteenth century.

In *Lectures on the Philosophy of History,* published in 1837, Hegel, the "father of history," clearly delineated his condescending racism for the entire continent of Africa, its peoples, and their cultures and justified their enslavement, claiming that "the only essential connection that has existed and continued between the Negroes and the Europeans is that of slavery."[5]

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs

Being an activist historian means incorporating the histories of all people—not just whitewashed histories. Stories such as that of BC's Mifflin Wistar Gibbs should be commonly known—yet are not. Mifflin Wistar Gibbs was the de facto leader of the Black community in Victoria beginning in 1858. Prior to his arrival, Gibbs was a successful businessman, community leader, and staunch supporter and ally of abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Gibbs's achievements and accomplishments in BC include being a partner in the Lester & Gibbs emporium, which was considered a competitor of the Hudson's Bay Company in gold-rush Victoria, a builder of the first railway in Haida Gwaii (formerly "Queen Charlotte Islands"), a Victoria city councillor in 1867, 1868, and 1869, a chair of the finance committee and acting mayor, and a delegate representing Salt Spring Island at the Yale Convention in September 1868 that helped to frame the terms of BC's entry into Confederation. Gibbs returned to the United States in 1870, where he pursued a career in law, eventually becoming the first elected Black municipal judge in the United States. In 1897, he was appointed by President McKinley as US consul to Madagascar. In 1902, he published *Shadow and Light: An Autobiography, with Reminiscences of the Last and Present Century.*[6]



Mifflin Wistar Gibbs, 1902.

Photo: Library of Congress

From page 29 of *Challenging Racist "British Columbia"—150 Years and Counting* (2021), a public domain history text developed by Nick Claxton, Denise Fong, Fran Morrison, Christine O'Bonsawin, Maryka Omatsu, John Price, and Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra, University of Victoria, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

When I began my PhD in the Department of History at UBC in 2014, I was the first Sikh woman to pursue a PhD in that department. Today, as I reach the end of my studies, I reflect on how my entire outlook has transformed. I came out of my first year traumatized because I felt like I did not belong in that department. But over the years, after reading racialized historians and theories based on critical race theory, I began to understand why I resisted so much that first year. To holistically teach the racist foundations of the history is

The Haitian Revolution and Historical Resistance

Have you heard of the Haitian Revolution? It was the largest slave rebellion since Ancient Rome, "a successful insurrection by self-liberated slaves against French colonial rule" in what is now Haiti, in the years 1791–1804. Historians believe this revolution had an enormous impact on the institution of slavery all around the world; it inspired stories that "shocked and frightened slave owners" everywhere and led to slave rebellions in the US and British colonies.[6]

Historians Susan Buck Morss and Michel Rolph Trouillot first wakened me to what had been erased in the field of history, at least in the way I had been taught it, through their writings on the Haitian Revolution. Morss writes in *Hegel, Haiti and Universal History* that "the critical writing of history is a continuous struggle to liberate the past from within the unconscious of a collective that forgets the conditions of its own existence."[7] That is, the act of writing history is a struggle to challenge the foundations we come from or are writing within. Accepting Hegel's prominence within the discipline needs to be challenged because of his problematic defence of the transatlantic slave trade—even when others of his time were abolitionists.

Michel Rolph Trouillot argues that "silence enters the process of historical production at four crucial moments: 1. Sources: the moment of fact creation (making sources) 2. Archives: the moment of fact assembly (making archives) 3. Narratives: the moment of fact retrieval (making narratives) 4. History: the moment of retrospective significance (making history)."[8] Therefore, "any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences."[9] To unbundle those silences as an ongoing act of decentring whiteness and systems of white supremacy is what an activist historian does.

to (hopefully) prevent other students from experiencing the trauma I faced. Having activist historians lead the way will create and move the discipline forward.

Activism in the margins

Activism is on a spectrum that includes street protests as well as pushing back against racist faculty, racist policies, and the coded daily language of racism. It includes writing, teaching, and choosing to centre racialized histories, historians, and scholars. Activism includes moving aside to cede space to racialized colleagues and coworkers rather than constantly co-opting the space to centre your own white power. To become an activist in history means to study the history of those who are not included within the system and the institution. It means seeing what is taking place around you and attaching those threads of history to your class lectures and how you teach the students. All of this is possible. I do it. And I love it.

To be an activist historian also means to find a place within the margins. The concept of the margins as a powerful space for acts of resistance was coined by the brilliant scholar bell hooks (she spelled her name in lowercase letters), and I wish to end this article by quoting from her, as she passed away in December 2021 but continues to inspire so many of us. She wrote the following:

> I am located in the margin. I make a definite distinction between that marginality which is imposed by oppressive structures and that marginality one chooses as site of resistance—as location of radical openness and possibility. This site of resistance is continually formed in that segregated culture of opposition that is our critical response to domination.
>
> We come to this space through suffering and pain, through struggle. We know struggle to be that which is difficult, challenging, hard and we know struggle to be that which pleasures, delights, and fulfills desire. We are transformed, individually, collectively, as we make radical creative space which affirms and sustains our subjectivity, which gives us a new location from which to articulate our sense of the world.[9]

Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at UBC, a sessional instructor in history at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV), a co-curator at the Sikh Heritage Museum, National Historic Site, Gur Sikh Temple, and the coordinator of the South Asian Studies Institute at UFV. She is also mother to two sons.

Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra presenting an exhibition for the South Asian Studies Institute.

Photo: South Asian Studies Institute Collection

There's More to Read

If you wish to read more writing by activist historians, here is a list of authors and titles to explore:

- **Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past, Power and Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015)**
- **Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000)**
- **CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963)**
- **Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999)**
- **Nell Irvine Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010)**
- **Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Women, Native, Other* (Indiana University Press: 1989)**
- **W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (London: Penguin Classics, 1996)**
- **Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York : Grove Press, 1963)**
- **bell hooks, "Marginality as a Site of Resistance," *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990)**
- **Sara Ahmad, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London: Routledge, 2004)**
- **Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1986)**

Endnotes

1. "Scientific Racism," Confronting Anti-Black Racism, Harvard Library, https://library.harvard.edu/confronting-anti-black-racism/scientific-racism
2. W.E.B Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk Essays and Sketches (*Chicago, Ill: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903).
3. Gustav Jahoda, "Towards scientific racism," *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings,* Tania Das Gupta, ed. (Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press: 2007), 41.
4. Jahoda, "Towards . . .", 41.
5. George W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* (1837), https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/51635
6. Excerpt from *Challenging Racist "British Columbia" — 150 Years and Counting* (2021), 29. A public domain history text developed by Nick Claxton, Denise Fong, Fran Morrison, Christine O'Bonsawin, Maryka Omatsu, John Price, and Sharanjit Kaur Sandhra, University of Victoria, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
7. "Haitian Revolution," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haitian_Revolution
8. Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History,* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009), 85.
9. bell hooks, "Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 36 (1989), 23.

Excerpt from *Before We Lost the Lake: A Natural and Human History of Sumas Valley* (Halfmoon Bay: Caitlin Press, 2018)

The Return of Sumas Lake

by Chad Reimer

> In an interview with the CBC, Sumas First Nation Chief Dalton Silver said, "despite the devastation caused by flooding over the past week, the Sumas First Nation is 'coping quite well' as their houses are built on ground that's higher than the ancient shallow lake. 'We had elders that told us before that should this lake . . . come back our homes would be OK. We knew the levels of the lake before.'"
>
> — Michelle Gomez, "Sumas First Nation built on higher ground, unaffected by flooding in former lake bed, says chief," CBC News, November 19, 2021, (https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/sumas-lake-history-1.6255693)

If we ended this book at the 25th anniversary of Sumas Lake's draining (that is in 1949) it would be easy to conclude that the grand project was an environmental failure and human failure. The bill for the works had soared to $10 million, large agricultural companies dominated local industry, family farms were failing, and clean-up operations were still underway after the second worst flood on record. At the same time, the Sema:th were robbed of the one resource essential to their way of life. But the story does not stop there. Through the second half of the twentieth century, the tragedy continued to afflict the lake's first peoples, but they refused to accept that fate and rallied to challenge the way they had been treated. Meanwhile, white farmers and residents benefited, as many of the promises originally made by drainage proponents were being met: the landscape of corporate estates and struggling family farms was transformed into an approximation of the family farm model envisioned by planners.

The ongoing issue of Sema:th rights and compensation is further complicated by the historical status of the lake bed itself. When the Sumas reserves were set up, this was not dry land but water, and thus reverted to the Crown. Sumas Lake and Valley fell within the Railway Belt, so the Crown in this case was the federal government, which then and now is constitutionally obligated to protect the interests of Indigenous people. The federal government permitted the provincial government to destroy a lake under federal jurisdiction; then, in 1923, Ottawa sold the exposed lakebed to Victoria for one dollar. The Sema:th were never consulted, and Indian Affairs did nothing to protect the band's interests. From the historical perspective at least—and quite possibly in legal terms—the federal government did not fulfill its obligations.

Sumas Lake (Semáts Xácho7) was drained a century ago to make room for agricultural settlers. In November of 2021, overflow from the Nooksack and the Fraser Rivers filled Sumas Lake, flooding sections of British Columbia Highway 1, and forcing the evacuation of 1,100 homes, displacing thousands of farmers, and killing more than half a million farm animals.

Source: "Sumas Lake," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumas_Lake

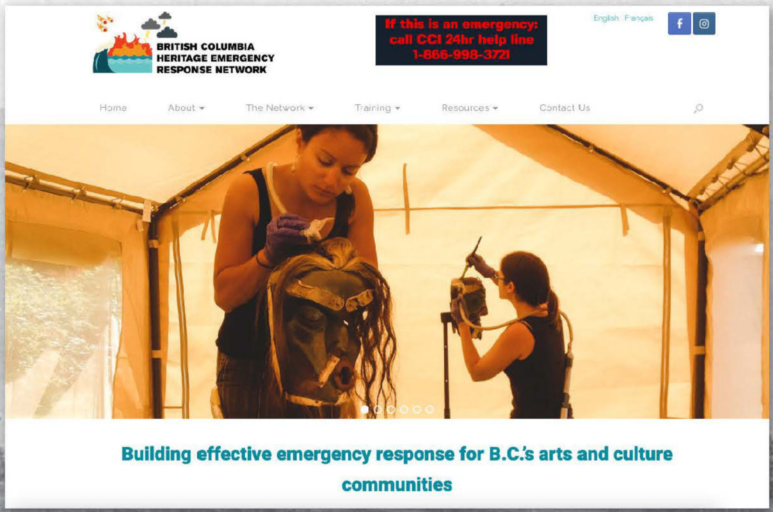
The recent claims of the Sumas band show us that the story of Sumas Lake is not over, that we are still living with its presence. The waters themselves tell us this as well, for the environmental conditions that created and sustained the lake are still there. Twice each year, spring and winter, the waters of the Sumas and Fraser River watersheds try to return to their natural place on the Sumas Valley floor. The machinery and technology used to keep these at bay have become more effective with each passing decade, and the flood threat has receded in the local imagination. This sense of security is faulty. A study released on the 100th anniversary of the 1894 flood concluded that there is a one-in-three chance that a flood at least as big will occur by the year 2045—and it may even be bigger. The 1894 flood was not the perfect storm of legend; it would have been higher if the Fraser and Thompson Rivers had peaked at exactly the same time, rather than a few days apart. All bets will be off if and when the perfect flood does happen, for not even the experts can predict whether the defences guarding the Sumas and Fraser Valleys will stand firm or not.

Chad Reimer holds a PhD in History from York University. He has published a number of books and articles on BC history.

British Columbia Heritage Emergency Response Network (BC HERN)

BC HERN began in 2021 and is now an expanding network of arts, culture, and hertiage professionals who support care and salvage of collections in local emergencies. See their website for more information about their work and to learn about training opportunities.

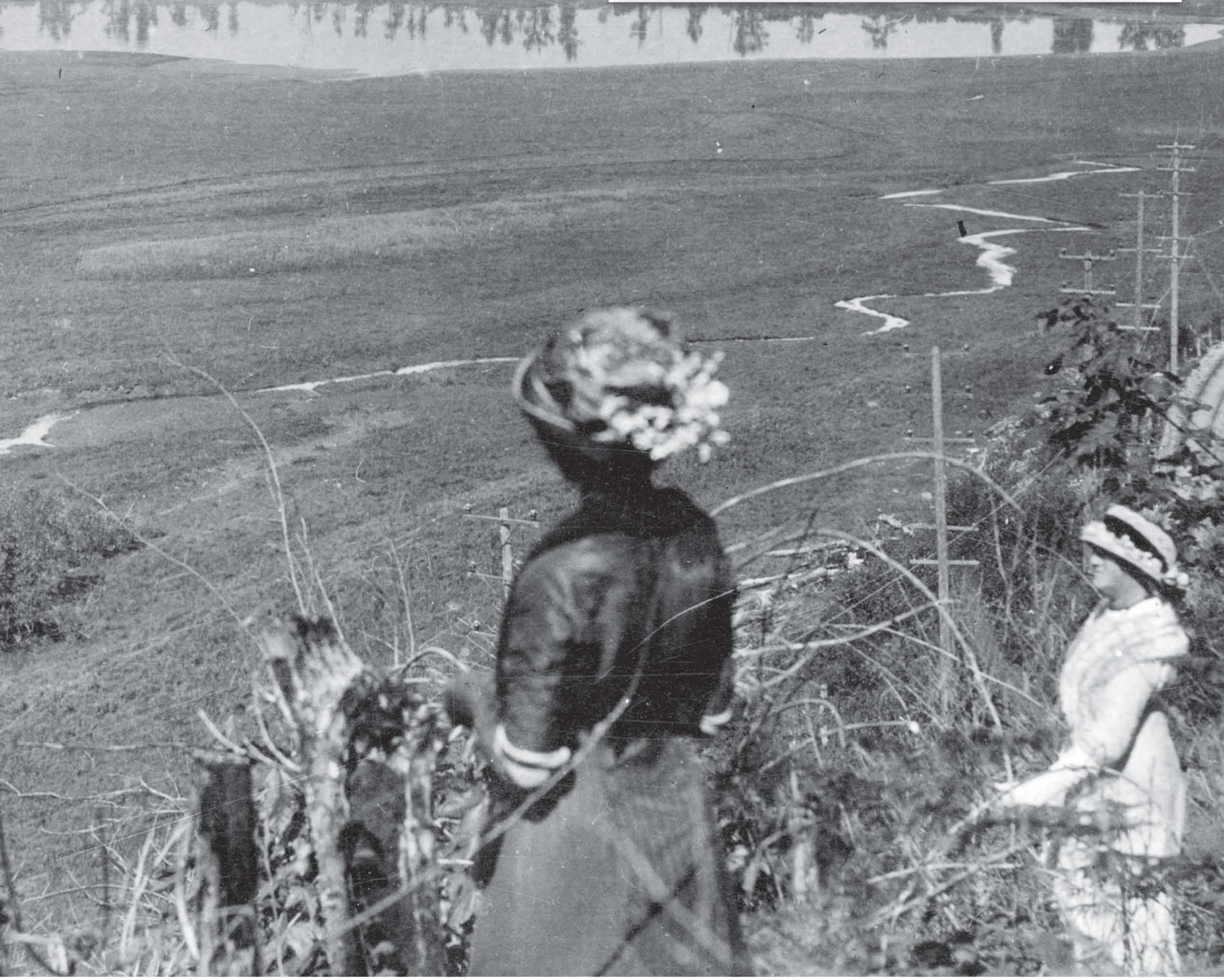
www.bchern.ca



BRITISH COLUMBIA HERITAGE EMERGENCY RESPONSE NETWORK

If this is an emergency: call CCI 24hr help line 1-866-998-3721

Building effective emergency response for B.C.'s arts and culture communities

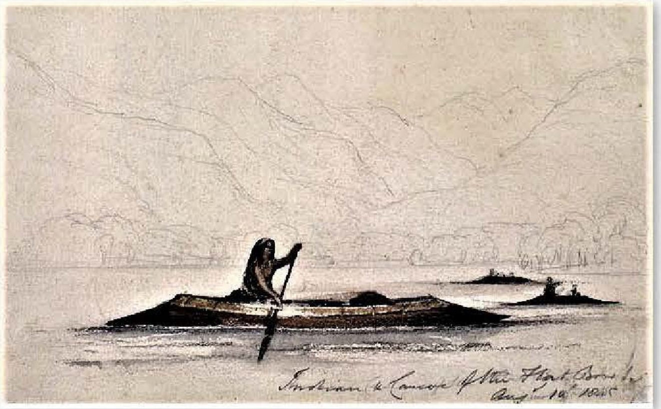


Looking over the southwestern part of Sumas Prairie and northward over Sumas Lake , circa 1913. This is the portion of Sumas Prairie inundated by flood waters in November 2021.

Photo: City of Vancouver Archives, Out P268

THE ART OF THE SPY
Henry James Warre

By Ed Mannings


Indian & Canoe of the Flat Bow Lake
Aug 10th 1845

"Indian & Canoe of the Flat Bow Lake," 1845 watercolour by Sir Henry James Warre. The distinctive sturgeon-nosed canoe rendered by Warre was part of life in the Traditional Territories of the Sinixt and Ktunaxa Peoples. Image: "Indian Canoe Crossing the Askow or Flatbow Lake (Kootenay Lake, BC)." Library and Archives Canada, Sir Henry James Warre fonds 2834202

British officer Lieutenant Henry James Warre and his party journeyed west across the Rocky Mountains and south through the Kootenays and followed the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver in the summer of 1845. Purportedly adventuring "as private travelers for the pleasure of field sports and scientific pursuits," Warre was actually a spy for the British government, doing military reconnaissance in anticipation of a war with the Americans during the Oregon Boundary Dispute. A talented artist, Warre made numerous sketches of scenes along his route. When the British bloodlessly ceded the territory south of the 49th parallel to the Americans in the 1846 Oregon Treaty, Warre's work was deemed superfluous, and he was given permission in 1848 to publish some of his sketches as hand-coloured lithographs—but was ordered not to mention the true purpose of his journey.

Library and Archives Canada holds some of his sketches and lithographs, including the August 10, 1845, lithograph on the right which Warre hand-titled "Indian & Canoe of the Flat Bow Lake." When I saw it, I immediately recognized the location, as it is the same view I have from our summer home on Kootenay Lake, looking east from Queens Bay toward Kootenay Bay and Crawford Bay and the Purcell Mountains.

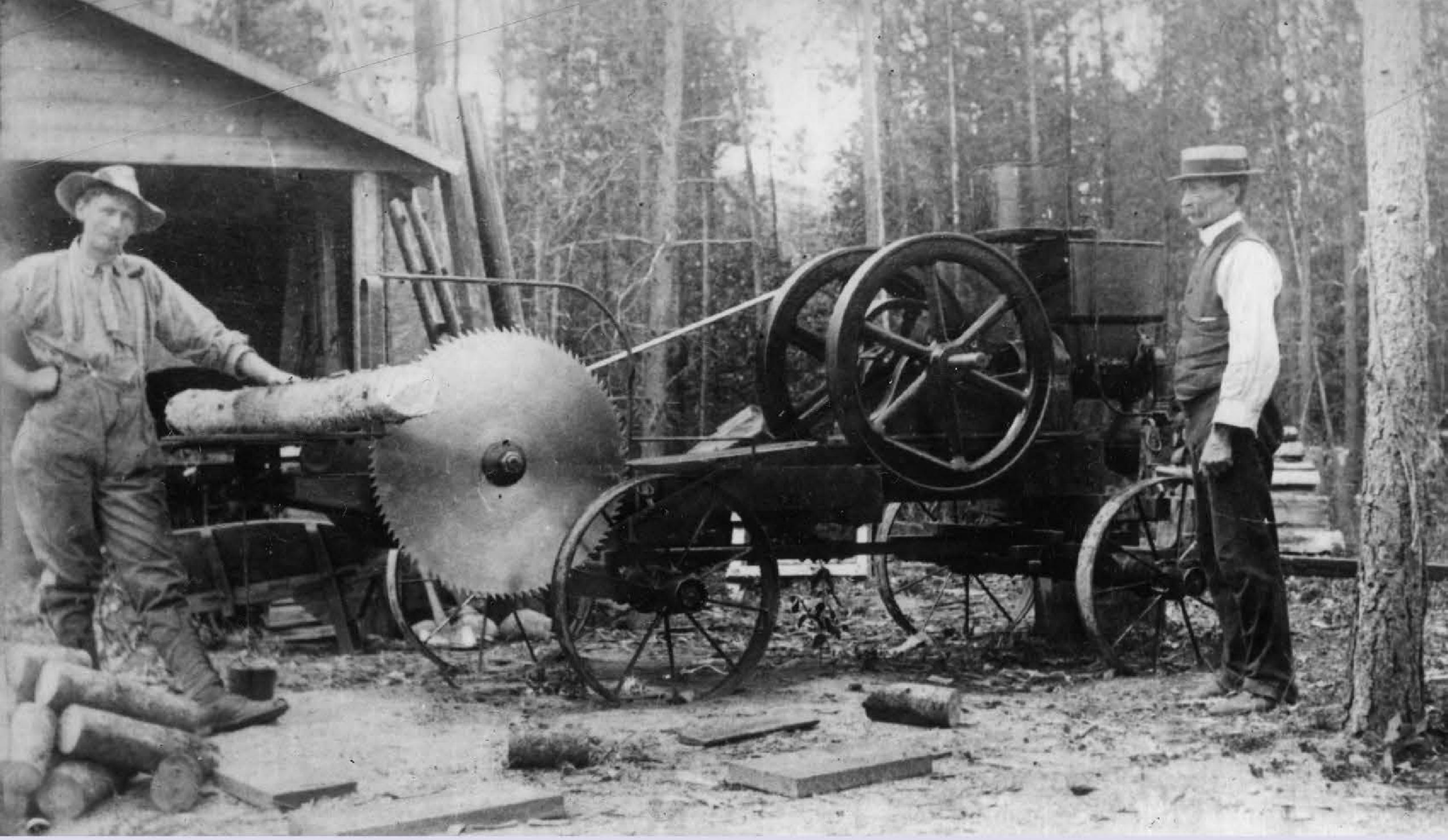
While presented as an iconic cultural scene, the pass in the background was most likely the military raison d'etre for the sketch; to show his route across the mountains to Kootenay Lake. (Using modern nomenclature, Warre had travelled west through the Rockies via Banff and the Bow River valley, south through Kootenay National Park and down the Kootenay River via Canal Flats to Fort Steele. He then turned west up the St. Mary's River and over little-known Rose Pass into the Crawford Creek drainage down to Kootenay Lake. From there, Warre travelled south to Lake Pend Oreille, west along the Pend Oreille River, then over the mountains to Fort Colville on the Columbia River.) Warre's report made it quite clear that, for troops and provisions, this route to the Columbia River—over such impractical waterways and mountains—which had been suggested by Sir George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company, "was quite impossible."

Modern-day Warre re-enactment on Kootenay Lake. Photo: Courtesy Ed Mannings

Rose Pass was later looked at by Edgar Dewdney in the 1860s when surveying his trail to Wild Horse Creek, and he too deemed it unworkable. It was then sometimes used by travellers and prospectors in the 1890s and briefly looked at for a railway route in 1909, but since then has seen very little use.

This modern-view (at left) photograph taken in 2021 from the beach in front of our house shows the current use of Kootenay Lake for recreation, with the lake ferry *Osprey* docked at Kootenay Bay on the east shore. I now wonder if Henry Warre might have sat on our beach 176 years ago to make his 1845 sketch.

Ed Mannings is a devotee and collector of Kootenay history. Images and artifacts from the past are his inspiration for learning the interesting stories behind the items. Ed was also a director of Touchstones Museum in Nelson when it expanded into its current location.



Percy Blakeman (left) and John Doyle cutting cordwood with a portable circular saw in Edgewood, early 1920s.
Photo: Arrow Lakes Historical Society, 2016.013.7.20

"Some Loving Words"

from an Arrow Lakes Pioneer to His Fiancée

By Paula Pope

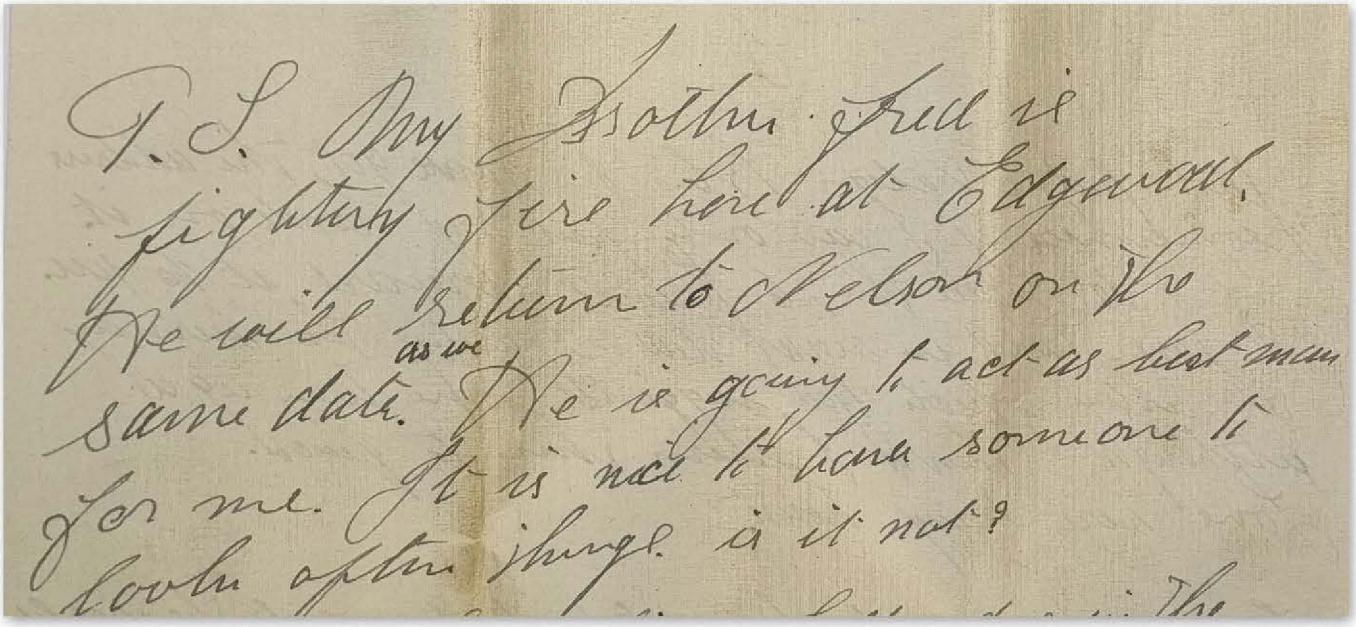
First-hand accounts of ancestors' lives are often hard to find, so it was fortunate for me when a letter written by my great-uncle in 1921 recently came into my hands. It sheds some light on old ways of life in the Arrow Lakes district of British Columbia.

The letter was written on August 21, 1921 by Percy Blakeman (1885–1955), who was living in Edgewood, and sent to his fiancée, Nina Glass (1883–1967), who lived at Syringa Creek. It's remarkable that it survived at all: perhaps because it was a love letter, it was kept and tucked away in a bag or book or somewhere out of sight.

Eileen O'Keefe Giuliani of Vancouver had come across the letter in papers belonging to her late parents, Tierney and Betty O'Keefe, who set up the Historic O'Keefe Ranch near Vernon as a heritage site.[1] As part of their search for authentic memorabilia to equip the ranch's general store, the O'Keefes visited the Arrow Lakes in the mid-1960s, buying old merchandise from low-lying settlements that were shortly to disappear with the building of new dams under the Columbia River Project.[2]

It was a coincidence that the letter was later found among those items. At that stage, the O'Keefes put it to one side, seeing it as a special keepsake that they would like to return to the Blakeman family. Their subsequent search was not straightforward as Percy and Nina did not have children. Nevertheless, Eileen's persistence paid off when she reached out to the Arrow Lakes Historical Society (https://alhs-archives.com/) based in Nakusp. I had visited their archives in 2014 as part of my family history research, and this enabled her to find me and forward the letter to me in England.

Percy's letter, written in ink and unfolding over



P.S. My brother Fred is
fighting fire here at Edgewood.
He will return to Nelson on the
same date as we. He is going to act as best man
for me. It is nice to have someone to
look after things. is it not?

"P.S. My brother Fred is fighting fire here at Edgewood . . . ." Extract from Percy Blakeman's letter, August 21, 1921.

Source: Courtesy Paula Pope

six pages, was an affectionate and practical response to Nina's letter. It told of his delayed voyage back to Edgewood from Nelson on the Canadian Pacific Railway shallow-draft sternwheeler that delivered passengers, mail, and freight to the isolated communities along the Arrow Lakes.

> The boat was very late the other night. I was so disappointed when Mrs Fraser said that you were there but I could not see you, but I waved my hat till the band came off . . . Do you know darling if we were not to be married till the spring I certainly would have had to come to the Creek to see you and it is a good job to know that I shall see you soon.

Percy also responded to Nina's concerns about her neighbours, the Frasers. He'd been staying in the same Nelson hotel as they had, before his return to Edgewood.[3]

> No doubt Mr and Mrs Fraser have told you all about their trip to Nelson and how their business turned out. They told me that they anticipated pulling out for Calgary right away. Mr Fraser told me that he had enough money to get out dear. He intends to let the land go back to Innes. I think that is a pity but under the present circumstances it may be best that they part with it.

Percy, an Edgewood resident of several years, was familiar with the challenges newcomers often faced as they tried to settle in such an isolated landscape. Percy himself was used to taking diverse jobs to get by, from clearing land under contract, logging, helping build the BC telephone line down the Arrow Lakes,[4] to picking fruit in the Okanagan with his friend Jack Swales.[5] He also held hunting and trapping licences for his taxidermy business.[6]

Percy believed he and Nina were well-placed for the start of their married life for, as he confided to Nina, "I am not too flush with funds but on the other hand we can manage." If it became necessary, Percy wrote that he was willing to "sell Mollie," one of his few portable assets. There is no further mention of Mollie in the letter. However, I was pleasantly surprised to discover later who Mollie was and that she remained with Percy, carrying him to victory in the Edgewood horse race of 1923.[7]

By contrast, Nina, a milliner from Edinburgh, was a recent arrival. She had travelled from Scotland in June 1920 as companion to her friend Alice Innes. Alice, with her husband, Urquhart Innes, intended to settle and farm in the Arrow Lakes. They appear in the June 1921 BC census, and along with other interesting characters, reappear in Percy's letter, dated just two months later. Among these characters were ex-navy man Leslie Fraser and his wife, Elizabeth, who did return their land to Mr Innes;[8] Abraham Hirst of Allandale, the local Justice of the Peace, who would hire out his boat for two dollars [$30 in 2022 values] to take Nina to visit friends up Syringa Creek before her wedding; and Archdeacon Graham, who would officiate on the day at St. Saviour's Church:

> I could not see the Parson when I was in Nelson, but I wrote him, so he will be letting me know by mail. He was at his summer residence away up the lake. I have got our licence dear.

Percy and Nina would next meet on August 26, catching the same boat to reach Nelson for their wedding. The best man is mentioned too:

> My brother Fred is fighting fire here at Edgewood. He will return to Nelson on the same date as we. He is going to act as best man for me. It is nice to have someone to look after things is it not?

Maintaining a fire watch for lightning strikes and fighting wildfires in the summer months was clearly an issue then as it is today in these rural communities.

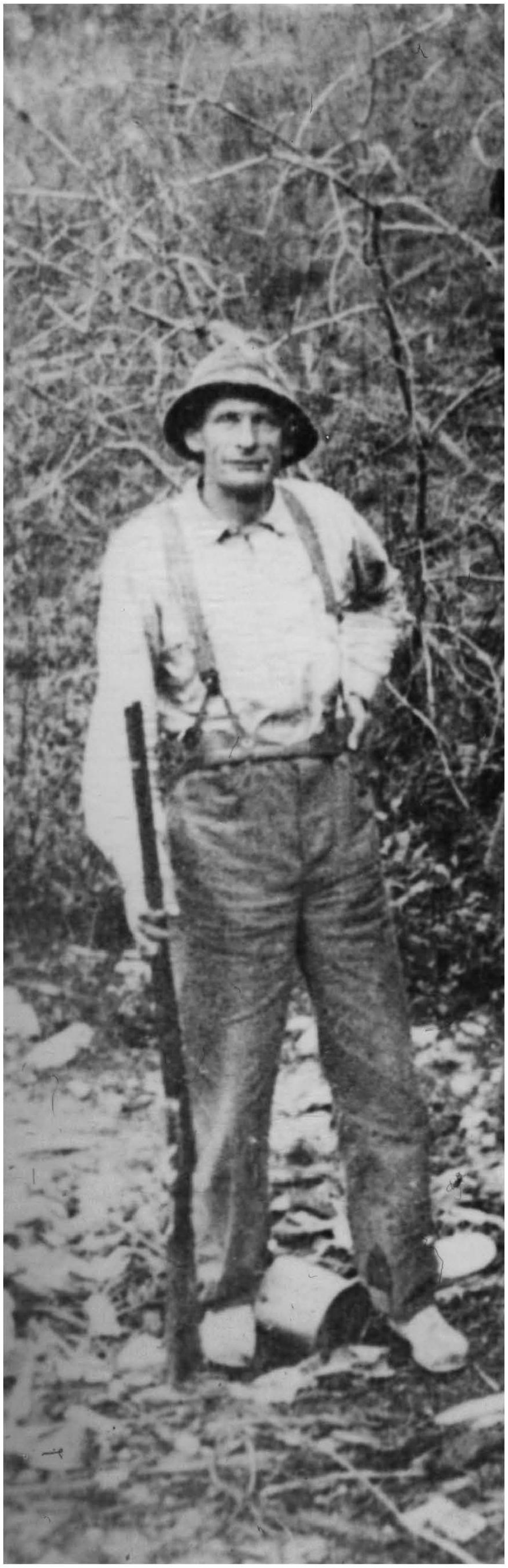
Finally, Percy's letter concluded with some loving words to his sweetheart:

> Coin me some word, oh truest heart, from out the world
> of loving art,
> In which till life and love are spent, Thou mayest be
> shrined and I content . . .[9]

Through online sources, these lines can be traced back to Henry Morford's popular "Verses of Love and Affection," which were printed in *Beadle's Dime Book of Verses.* It was an unexpected pleasure for me to have a glimpse of Percy and Nina's lives 100 years ago, just before their marriage on August 30, 1921.

Note: I am indebted to Eileen O'Keefe Giuliani for sending me the letter and contributing to this article.

Dr. Paula Pope is a retired UK youth and community lecturer. Her interests in travel and family social history have led her to discover more of her ancestors' lives in Scandinavia, Australia, and Canada.

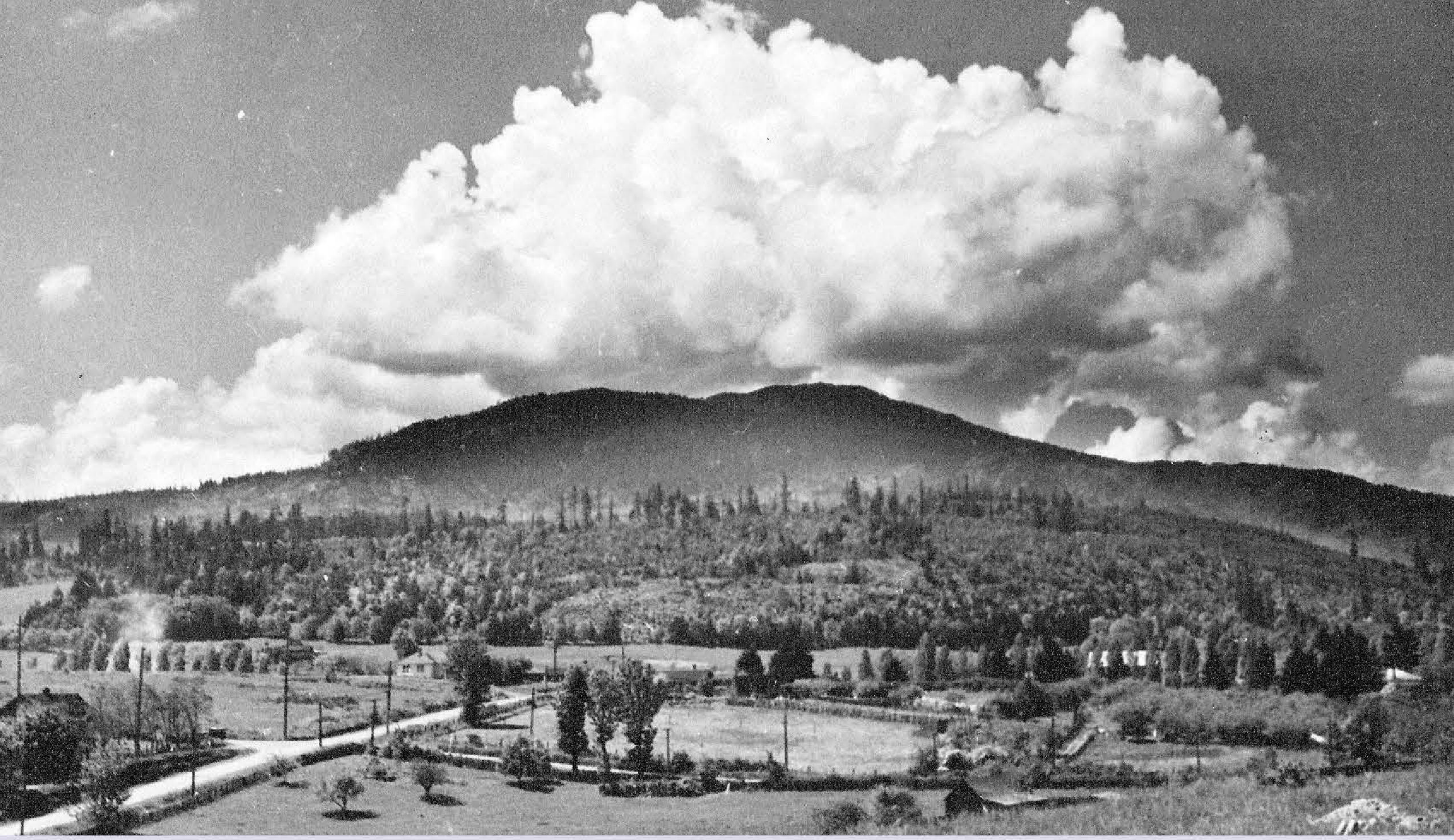


Percy Blakeman at the "Gunwad" cabin, Edgewood, 1920s.

Photo: Arrow Lakes Historical Society, 2016.013.8.46

Endnotes

1. The Historic O'Keefe Ranch at Vernon, https://okeeferanch.ca/ranch-history/collections-and-research.
2. For more on the Columbia River Project, see "Action on the Columbia" a 1965 BC Hydro film, produced by Lew Parry, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pj_rbZe7dCA and the Bonneville Power Administration Film Vault, www.bpa.gov/goto/Films.
3. The Hume Hotel guest list included Mr. and Mrs. L.W. Fraser, Syringa Creek, and Percy Blakeman, Edgewood, according to *The Daily News* (Nelson), August 18, 1921, 2.
4. Obituary notice for Percy Blakeman, February 17, 1955, courtesy of Arrow Lakes Historical Society.
5. Ted Swales, "The Swales Family of Kaleden," *Okanagan Historical Society Annual Report,* (2000), Volume 64: 174-6. Available at Penticton Museum and at https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/ohs/items/1.0132247?o=0
6. Taxidermy notices in *The Daily News* (Nelson), September 14, 1921, 6; and April 23, 1923, 6.
7. "Edgewood and District Labor Day Races" lists "Horse race 1. P. Blakeman on his mare Molly," *The Daily News* (Nelson), September 7, 1923, 5.
8. *The Daily News* (Nelson) article of June 3, 1921, 5, titled, "Settlers flock to Syringa Creek," noted that ". . . another new arrival is Leslie Fraser, an ex-navy man from Nova Scotia, who has purchased the Quance Place from Mr. Innes, the post master." Later, the same newspaper reports on May 24, 1923, 8, that Mr. Innes was living at "what was known as the Fraser property."
9. Extract of a poem by Henry Morford in *Rhymes from Twenty Years* printed in New York in 1859, 189–90, that was reproduced in *Beadle's Dime Book of Verses* published in 1868.



View of Mount Benson, 1940s. Photo: Nanaimo Community Archives. Lovick Studio Collection 2018010A-P37

ON HALLOWED GROUND

The crash of Queen Charlotte Airlines Flight 102

By Darrell Ohs

It was the worst aviation disaster in BC history of its time. Nearly 71 years ago, a now maturely forested site halfway up the north face of Mount Benson on Vancouver Island was a bleak and burning landscape of skeletal aircraft remains and charred bodies. Contents and personal effects were scattered up to 500 feet [152 metres] from the point of impact where the aircraft had flown straight into the face of a rock outcropping and exploded into a flash of blue and orange flames that was seen and heard up to several miles away.[1] Under driving rain on October 17, 1951, the first eyewitnesses on site used flashlights to shine their way through the scattered and smoking fires of burning wreckage, fuel, and oil. Flashlight beams and flames, hissing and steaming under the downpour, illuminated broken bodies and random luggage contents: a red slipper and a red sweater, a machinist's micrometer, a bricklayer's union card, and some pulp fiction novels.

Flying in the dark

The airplane was a military surplus Canso PBY-5A built in 1941 for RCAF anti-submarine bomber patrol. Acquired and converted for civilian passenger use by Queen Charlotte Airlines (QCA) and registered as CF-FOQ, the ill-fated aircraft was en route to Vancouver from the Aluminum Company of Canada's (ALCAN) hydro dam and smelter project in Kitimat. The plane was filled to capacity.[2]

The aircraft took off from Kitimat at 3:30 p.m. and was to arrive in Vancouver at 6:10 p.m. Official nightfall was 5:50 p.m. Heavy rain was reported in Nanaimo, with a cloud ceiling of 400 to 500 feet [122 to 152 metres]. The crash occurred at 6:58 p.m., more than an hour after nightfall.[3]

Regardless of weather conditions and darkening skies, pilot Doug McQueen continued the flight under Visual Flight Rules (VFR) rather than landing and remaining in Port Hardy or Comox overnight. McQueen was not fully qualified to fly by Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) nor was the Canso certified for IFR.[4]

The last radio report from the Canso came at 6:48 p.m., estimating their position to be on course 20 miles [32 kilometres] west of Vancouver. But in the dark, McQueen didn't realize that the aircraft was in fact 37 miles [60 kilometres] to the west of the proper flight path. Flying west of Nanaimo he mistook the city's lights—as seen through the fog and rain-obscured cockpit windows—for those of Vancouver. Ten minutes later, the Canso flew into the side of Mount Benson.

The crash

About the time of the final radio transmission, Brannen Lake resident Frank Murphy saw the Canso fly low and fast over his home on Doumont Road. As a former RCAF Flying Officer at Air Force Station Patricia Bay on the Saanich Peninsula, Murphy had conducted pilot training on Cansos during the Second World War. He feared the worst as he watched the familiar aircraft's running lights disappear into the clouds over east Wellington (a neighbourhood north of Nanaimo).[5] It is thought that the pilot circled the city lights of Nanaimo twice to get his bearings, then veered to the west. Founder and president of Queen Charlotte Airlines, Jim Spilsbury, explained that to approach Vancouver from the west, aircrews must turn back over the Georgia Strait to position the aircraft for an approach from the sea.[6]

At the Jingle Pot Road electrical substation, operator Keith Price saw the plane circle the area, flying just 50 feet [15 metres] above the 130,000-volt high-tension wires. Price could almost read the numbers on the plane.[7]

Suddenly the plane roared southwest towards Mount Benson and smashed in a sheet of flame against the mountainside. The Canso's rate of climb from the substation at elevation 475 feet [145 metres] was approximately 1,000 feet in 1.2 miles [305 m in 2 kilometres]. Performance specifications of the Canso PBY-5A indicate a maximum rate of climb at 1,000 feet per minute.

At a rated climbing speed of 100 miles per hour [161 kilometres per hour], the pilot struggled to gain altitude while vainly searching for the horizon in zero visibility through the gloomy, rain-soaked sky. Through the fog, Price saw the explosive impact at 1,600 feet [488 metres] on Mount Benson.

The aircraft struck a nearly vertical rock outcrop then fell onto a narrow ledge approximately 50 feet [15 metres] below. Analysis of the wreckage by the Department of Transportation indicated that the aircraft struck the face in an inverted position.[8]

Without visual references, such as a visible horizon, the occupants of the plane could have been spatially disoriented, not knowing which way was up. Perhaps the pilot was making a tight banked turn when the plane inverted.

The victims

From the end of Kilpatrick Road, four search parties started to climb different routes in the dark towards the wreckage. After almost three hours of crawling over salal, rocks, and slash, Owen "Wimpy" Jones of the *Nanaimo Free Press* was among the first to reach the scene of the tragedy. Well before reaching the point of impact, Jones saw scattered pieces of the plane.

"There was an odour of burning flesh. You could smell it a mile away. That and the gas," he reported. "Old stumps were on fire. Pieces of the plane were burning all over the place. We used the flames and our flashlights to see."[9]

Also on scene that night, *Vancouver Sun* reporter Clem Russell wrote, "We found nothing but the smashed and smouldering bodies of six of the victims. Our flashlights could find no trace of the other 17 victims in the eerie blackness and driving rain.

"The body of a man lay with his head on a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher. Farther away, where a wing was resting on a snag, a charred body was huddled, one logging-booted foot projecting through the undergrowth. Another man's hand protruded through a cabin window."[10]

Only 20 bodies were found after an exhaustive search with just eight positively identified. The rest of the missing are presumed to have been incinerated. After the inquest at the Westwood Hirst Funeral home, led by the Nanaimo coroner, arrangements were made to return the identified remains to their communities.[11]

On October 25, 12 of the 23 killed were buried in a mass grave in the Nanaimo Cemetery, four of whom had been "tentatively" identified. They were Patrick Brisson of Vancouver, Thomas Bone of Vancouver, Robert McFayden of Vancouver, and John Redding of New Westminster.

Officiants of the Catholic, Protestant, and Sikh faiths performed funeral rites and ceremonies over the twelve caskets. Before a bugler sounded the "Last Post," the padre of Branch 10 Canadian Legion offered prayers for the souls of the departed.

Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, on their first royal visit to Canada, sent condolences from Winnipeg. Their itinerary had them arrive on Vancouver Island for scheduled visits to Victoria and Nanaimo, coincidentally just a few days after the crash.[12]

Overnight, Nanaimo went from mourning to celebration as the city gave a red-carpet welcome to the royals at the Civic Arena. The Princess and Duke rested at Eaglecrest Lodge in Qualicum Beach, then, possibly to avoid becoming a distraction, made an impromptu visit to Port Alberni on the day of the funeral.[13]

Inquiry

The Department of Transportation Report No. 51-38 concluded that an "examination failed to disclose any evidence of malfunctioning of the airframe, engines, or controls, though the latter were so badly burned as to offer no reliable information."[14] It was also determined that the aircraft had adequate fuel on board and had been loaded in conformance with its capacity.

The investigation of the evidence established that "the probable cause of this accident was the continuance of the flight by VFR at night and under weather conditions of restricted visibility. Whilst it cannot be determined conclusively, it is probable that through a navigation error the pilot mistook Nanaimo for Vancouver. This may have been precipitated by inadequate pre-flight preparation in that the latest meteorological information was not obtained by the pilot before taking off on the south bound flight."

Aftermath

The tragedy was no respecter of social and economic class. One of the passengers was Joseph Eric Melanson, the chief project engineer for Kitimat Constructors Alcan Project. He left behind his wife and five children. Another was a 46-year-old labourer, Patrick Arthur Brisson, whose last known address was the YMCA in Vancouver. Those who nearly made it home to their nearby communities were Lake Cowichan resident John David Watson, married with two children and comptroller for Kitimat Constructors, and Parksville resident J.B. Ferguson, welder and father of four.[15]

Founded in 1943, for a time Queen Charlotte Airlines was Canada's third largest airline. After this crash, the Department of Transportation punitively restricted QCA flying licences to short routes, no more than 100 miles [161 kilometres] from their bases. On appeal, some routes were extended but the profitable ALCAN/Kemano-to-Vancouver flights were still deemed off-limits for the QCA fleet.

In 1955, still struggling with curtailed operations, QCA was sold to rival company Pacific Western Airlines.[16]

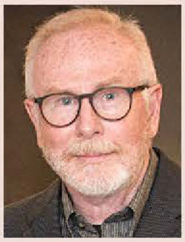
Endnotes

1. Department of Transport, Air Services Branch, Civil Aviation Division, *Summary Accident Report*, Serial No. 51-38; *Vancouver Sun*, Thursday, October 18, 1951; Interview with Frank Murphy by Darrell Ohs, January 2004.
2. Department of Transport *Summary Accident Report*, Serial No. 51-38; *Queen Charlotte Airlines Ltd., Flight Operations Manual*, published January 28, 1952.
3. Department of Transport *Summary Accident Report*, Serial No. 51-38.
4. Howard White and Jim Spilsbury, *The Accidental Airline: Spilsbury's QCA* (Madeira Park, BC, Harbour Publishing, 1994), 184.
5. Interview with Frank Murphy by Darrell Ohs, January 2004.
6. White and Spilsbury, "Mount Benson" and "Aftermath." *The Accidental Airline.*
7. *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, October 18, 1951.
8. Department of Transport, *Summary Accident Report, Serial No. 51-38*, "(d) Scene of the Accident."
9. "Mount Benson Crash Second Worst in Canadian History," *The Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, October 18, 1951.
10. "Plan Crash Ghastly Sight 1800 Feet Up Mount Benson," *The Vancouver Sun* (October 18, 1951).
11. "Three Experts To Probe Crash," *The Province*, October 19, 1951.
12. White and Spilsbury, *The Accidental Airline*, 186.
13. "Victims of Mount Benson Air Disaster Laid At Rest In Cemetery At Nanaimo," *The Province*, October 26, 1951.
14. Department of Transport, *Summary Accident Report, Serial No. 51-38*.
15. "Victims of Mount Benson . . ."; "Three Experts . . ." ; "Mount Benson Crash . . ."; Jan Peterson, *Harbour City: Nanaimo in Transition 1920-1967*, (Victoria, BC: Heritage House, 2006), "The Postwar Period"; Stanley Strazza, unpublished research notes and photos.
16. White and Spilsbury, "Aftermath" *The Accidental Airline*; Peterson, "The Postwar Period" *Harbour City*.

There is no memorial to honour the victims and to convey an account of this tragedy and the circumstances that led to it.

The Nanaimo Historical Society (NHS) is looking to cooperate with the City of Nanaimo to establish a memorial at Northfield Rotary Lookout Park, situated at the intersection of the Parkway (Hwy 19) and Northfield Road. From this park, the vista of Mount Benson can be seen.

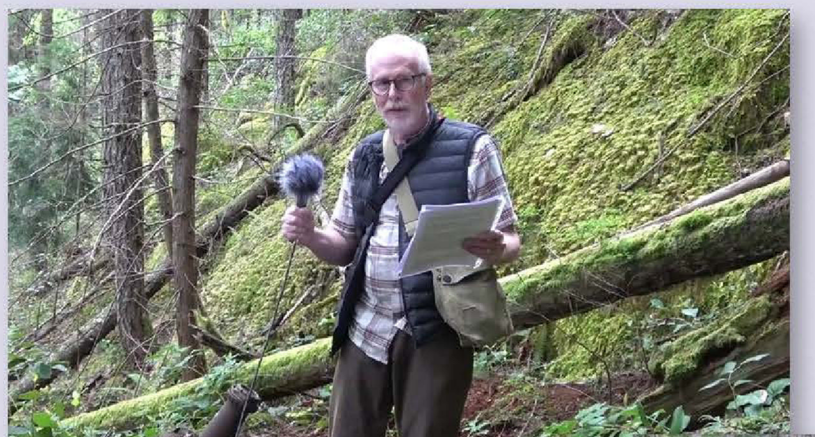
City of Nanaimo Parks is supportive of the request and will assist in presenting a proposal from the NHS to a city council meeting in February 2022.



Darrell Ohs is a fourth-generation Vancouver Islander and former freelance writer and photographer. He has contributed articles and news items to a variety of magazines, often specializing in classic motorcycle riding and restorations for publishers in the UK and US. He was a frequent contributor of Vancouver Island-based stories to the *Times-Colonist,* with a focus on contemporary historical features capturing the connections between local people, places, and things on the cusp of entering the shades of our past. Darrell served as president of the Nanaimo Historical Society from 2014 to 2020.

On May 25, 2021, Darrell Ohs (past president of the Nanaimo Historical Society), Steve Hughes (aviation enthusiast and member of the Nanaimo Historical Society), Ambrose Knobel (hiker and aviation enthusiast), Doug McLeod (student of archeology at Vancouver Island University), and Tom Paterson (author and historian) hiked Mount Benson to examine and discuss the crash of Flight 102.

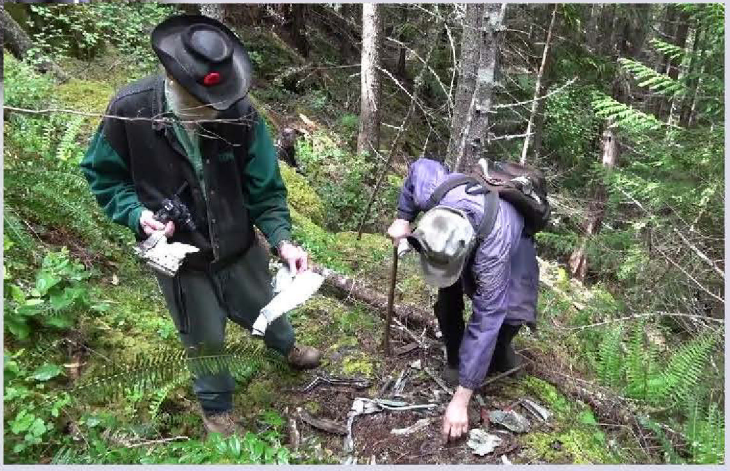
Photos: From https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oCe99haWOac, Videography by Tony Orchard (Treasurer of the Nanaimo Historical Society)



Darrell Ohs discusses the story of Flight 102, standing next to its wreckage.

Steve Hughes and Ambrose Knobel hike the Mount Benson trail to the wreckage of Flight 102.

Steve Hughes holds up wreckage from Flight 102, standing beside Ambrose Knobel.



Tom Paterson and Doug McLeod examine and identify the wreckage of Flight 102.

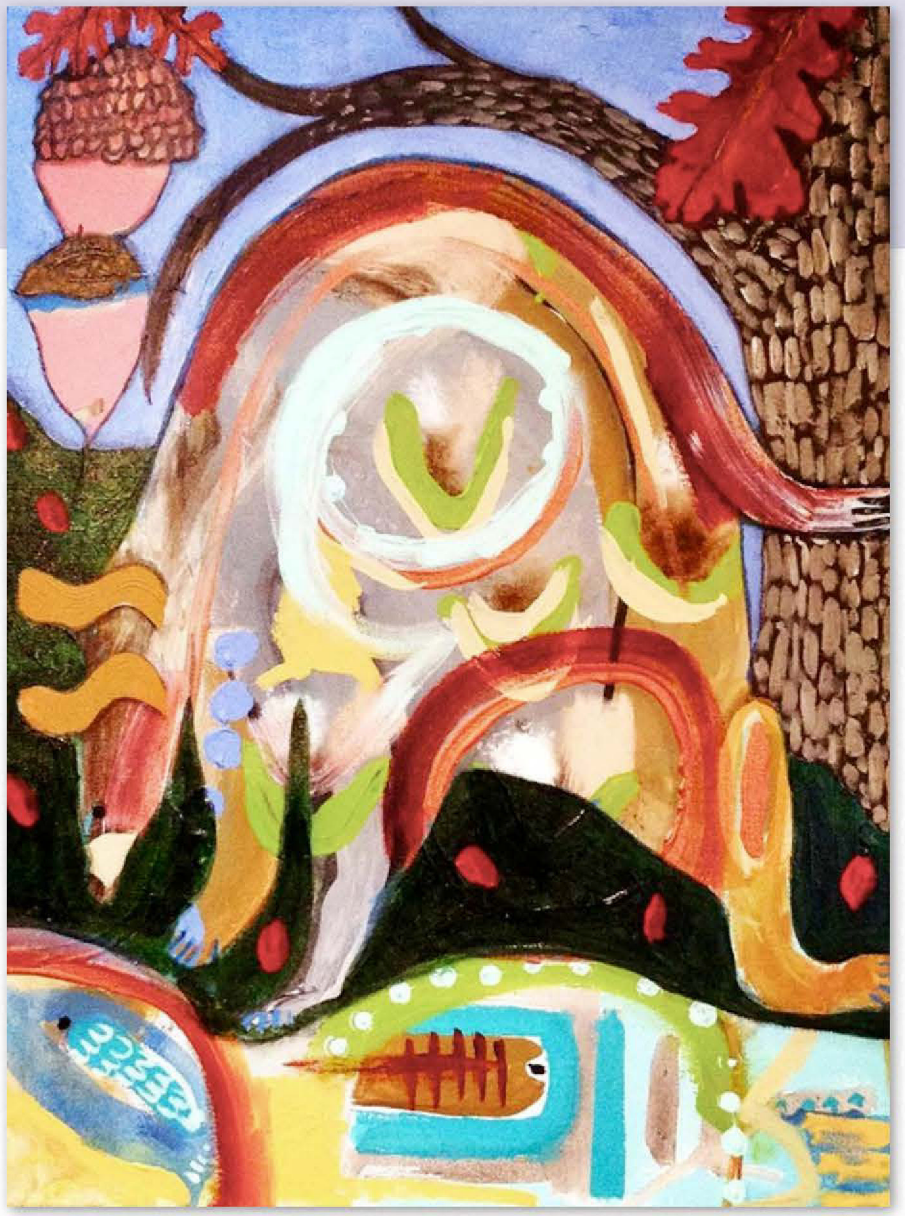
SharingSpace
RECLAIMING BC'S INDIGENOUS HISTORY

States of Matter

By Jenn Ashton

At 3:00 p.m. Betty put down her knitting needles and died. It wasn't 3:00 p.m. everywhere, of course, but in her own small apartment over the smoke shop it was. Betty had been knitting little bird nests for the wildlife and bird rescue centre across town. There was always a call for them in the spring, when people would bring in eggs they found or when rescued mother birds could not find natural nest-making supplies within their man-made wooden chicken coops. Sadly, Betty's demise meant they would not be delivered. When people finally got around to packing up her place to make way for the smoke shop renovations, which would include her apartment being converted into a "cigar lounge," the little knitted bird nests were fodder for the Goodwill bag along with most of Betty's possessions.

An excerpt from "Nest" in *People Like Frank and Other Stories from the Edge of Normal* by Jenn Ashton (New Westminster, BC: Tidewater Press 2020).



"The Fall of the Great Bear," acrylic on canvas by Jenn Ashton, 2019. Although we know Jenn as our Writer-in-Residence for 2021-2022, she is an accomplished painter. Her art permeates *People Like Frank,* and here provides another language, another connection to her family and past.

While history is not fluid, the ongoing evolution of discovery is. Although events themselves do not change, their context is continuously being rearranged, and our knowledge of the story expands exponentially if we remain eager to investigate the truths.

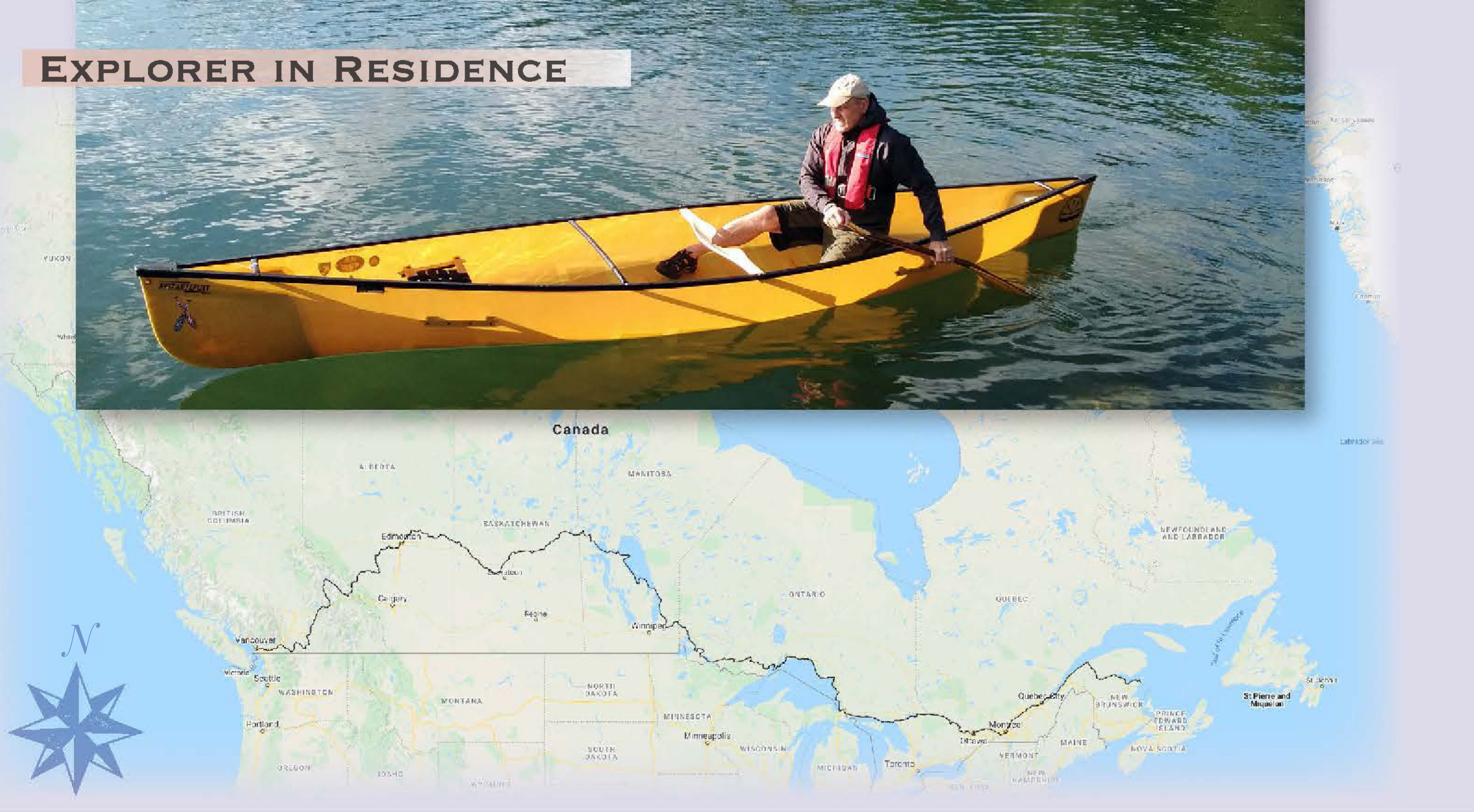
Like the characters in "Nest," who remain curious, the joy of research is like the joy found in creating: the reward isn't just in the discovery, but in following the string as we unravel the story to see where it leads us.

As we continue to evolve, history will always remain a vast ocean, open to examination by eager minds. So, while history sits solidly within the past, it is also fluid, like water.

PHOTO BY MELISSA NEWBERY

Jenn Ashton is an award-winning author and visual artist. Her book of short stories, *People Like Frank and Other Stories from the Edge of Normal* (Tidewater Press 2020), was shortlisted for the Indigenous Voices Award for Fiction (2021). Jenn is a graduate of The Writer's Studio at Simon Fraser University and is currently working on her next book.

EXPLORER IN RESIDENCE


Canada
YUKON
BRITISH COLUMBIA
ALBERTA
SASKATCHEWAN
MANITOBA
ONTARIO
QUEBEC
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Edmonton
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Regina
Winnipeg
Vancouver
Seattle
WASHINGTON
Portland
OREGON
IDAHO
MONTANA
NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH DAKOTA
MINNESOTA
Minneapolis
WISCONSIN
MICHIGAN
Toronto
Ottawa
Montreal
Quebec City
NEW BRUNSWICK
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
NOVA SCOTIA
MAINE
VERMONT
NEW HAMPSHIRE
St Pierre and Miquelon
N

The Wake of History

Across Canada on foot and by canoe

Bert ter Hart, *in conversation with K. Jane Watt (part one of four)*

Bert ter Hart has allowed us to join him on his journey across Canada from Gabriola Island, BC, to Big Shippegan Lighthouse, New Brunswick. His exploration across Canada—in the footsteps and the paddle strokes of Indigenous people, European mapmakers, and ordinary travellers—is a quest to understand the shared experiences that have shaped this country, the small acts that a great number of people have undertaken. Beyond the everyday challenges he will face in this journey, he is constrained by time: he must travel to, and cross, the Rocky Mountains at Howse Pass as early as possible in the spring to beat winter to New Brunswick. We caught up with him with a few questions in late November as he was planning, and training for, his journey.

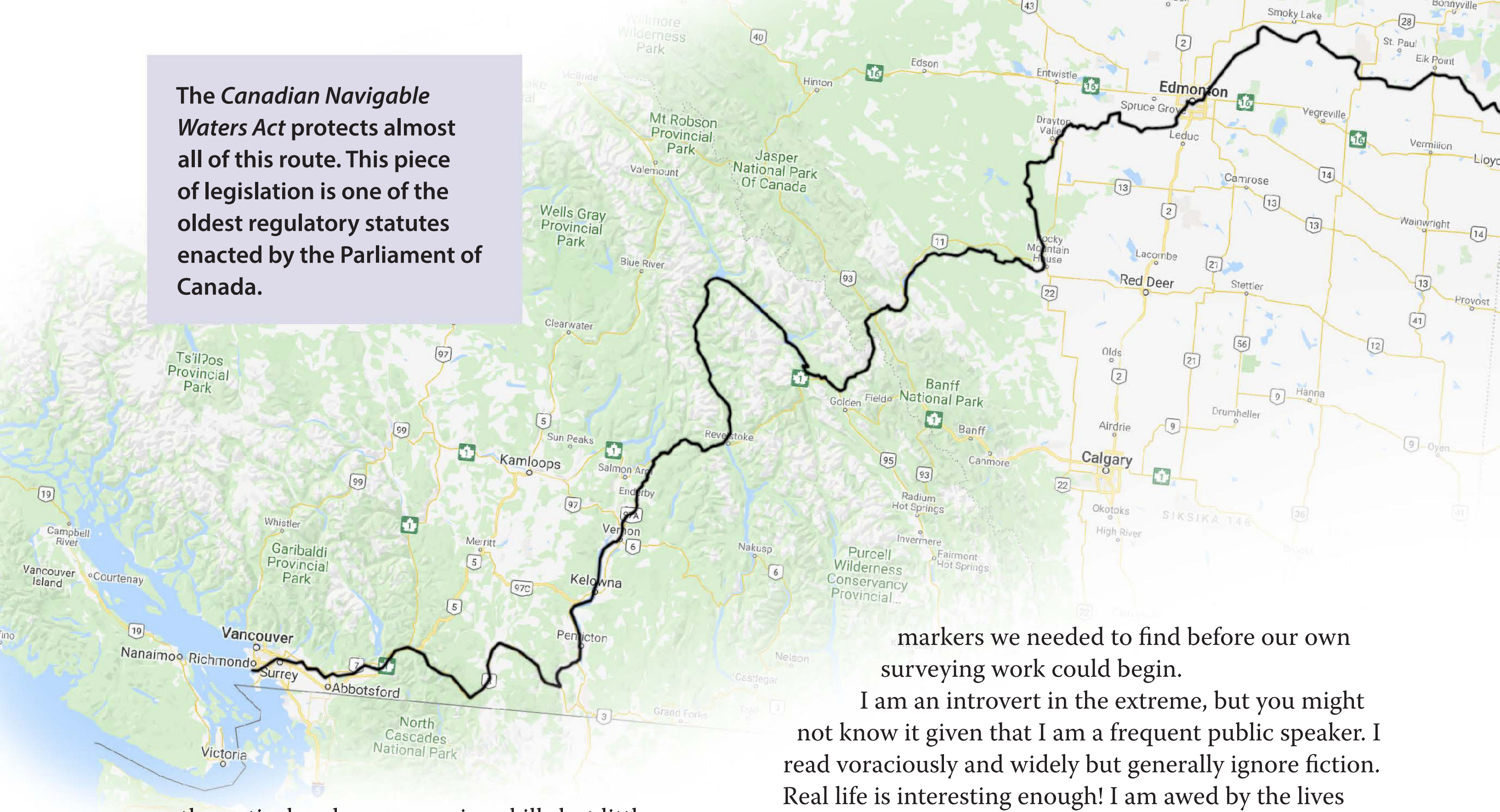
Q: How would you describe yourself?

A: I was born and grew up on the Canadian Prairies. Surrounded by a vast expanse of sky and a limitless horizon, I loved everything about the Prairies. My parents immigrated to Canada from Holland in the early 1950s and, despite both having travelled around the world more than once, Canada, and specifically Saskatchewan, drew them like no other place on Earth.

My father came to Canada after a career in the Dutch merchant navy. He was a navigator, and he plied those same skills as a land surveyor in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Working with my father, I trudged miles through prairie grasslands, ravines, coulees, and birch forests. The land deeply inspired him. He had a profound respect for the First Nations peoples who had lived and thrived in such a harsh and frequently inhospitable place.

At just 17, I joined the Canadian Armed Forces looking for an education and a career in the navy. In my first year at Royal Roads Military College on Vancouver Island [now Royal Roads University], I learned that I was almost completely colour-blind. If I wanted to serve, it would be in the army or not at all.

I eventually became a platoon commander in the Canadian Special Service Forces, rising to the rank of captain. This was about as far removed from the sea as could be imagined. I left the Forces to attend graduate school and get to sea as a physical oceanographer. I graduated with advanced


Edmonton
Red Deer
Calgary
Banff National Park
Jasper National Park Of Canada
Mt Robson Provincial Park
Wells Gray Provincial Park
Kamloops
Revelstoke
Golden
Vernon
Kelowna
Penticton
Vancouver
Surrey
Abbotsford
Victoria
Rocky Mountain House
Garibaldi Provincial Park
North Cascades National Park
Purcell Wilderness Conservancy Provincial...

The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* protects almost all of this route. This piece of legislation is one of the oldest regulatory statutes enacted by the Parliament of Canada.

mathematical and programming skills but little prospect of spending any time at sea. Leveraging my technical skill, I became an entrepreneur, eventually building a career around developing software and IT automations for health care professionals.

As soon as I could afford it, I went to sea in my own boat using the same tools to navigate that my father had used to sail around the world and to survey on the Prairies. These were the same tools, in fact, that early surveyors and mapmakers had used decades and sometimes centuries before to place the monuments and markers we needed to find before our own surveying work could begin.

I am an introvert in the extreme, but you might not know it given that I am a frequent public speaker. I read voraciously and widely but generally ignore fiction. Real life is interesting enough! I am awed by the lives and stories that surround us all.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about your previous journeys?

A: My passion for oceans and oceanography translated into 45,000 miles [72,420 km] sailed aboard *Seaburban* and a keen advocacy for the citizen-scientist in all of us. I have studied the role the world's oceans and coastal seas play in moderating and regulating climate, nutrient productivity, pollution distributions, and salmon migration.

Timeline of the journey

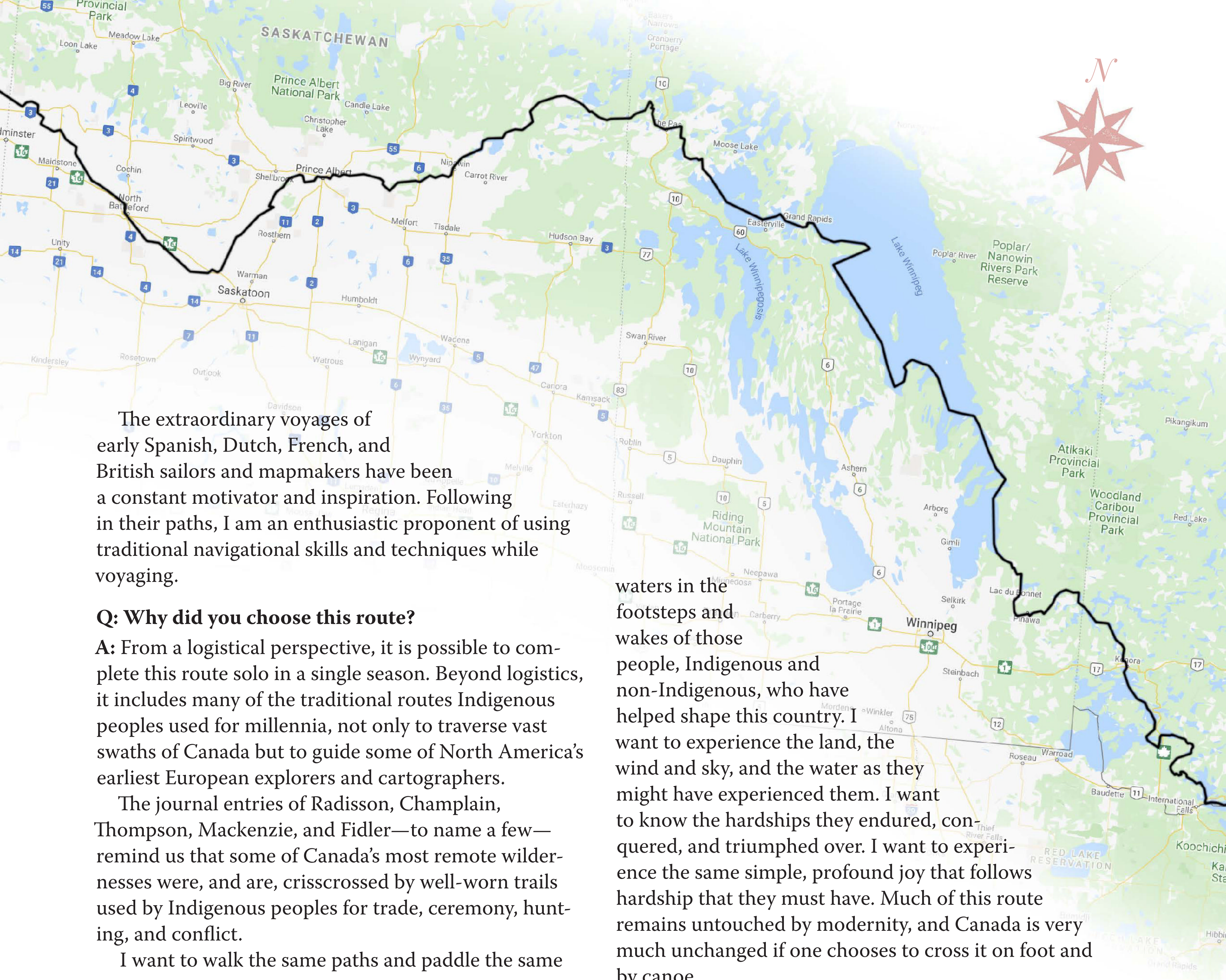
The timeline for the trek is roughly as follows

1 APRIL • Departure from Gabriola Island, BC
2 MAY • Howse Pass, AB
4 MAY • Saskatchewan River Crossing, AB
6 MAY • Rocky Mountain House, AB
20 MAY • Confluence of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers, SK
1 JUNE • Grand Portage, Minnesota
15 JUNE • Lake Winnipeg, MB
4 JULY • Atikokan, ON
15 JULY • Fort William, Thunder Bay, ON
15 AUG • French River, ON
1 SEPTEMBER • Ottawa, ON
15 SEPTEMBER • Montreal, QC
18 SEPTEMBER • Québec City, QC
1 OCTOBER • Grand-Métis, QC
5 OCTOBER • Halifax, NS
15 OCTOBER • Big Shippegan Lighthouse, NB

TOTAL DISTANCE • approximately 6,900 km (as calculated by Google Maps). Allowing an extra 500 km considering the straight lines used to trace the route on the map, the total distance is closer to 7,400 km.

TOTAL TIME • approximately 210 days

ESTIMATED AVERAGE DAILY DISTANCE • 7,400 km/210 days yields 35km / day


N
SASKATCHEWAN
Prince Albert National Park
Prince Albert
North Battleford
Saskatoon
Warman
Rosthern
Melfort
Tisdale
Nipawin
Carrot River
Hudson Bay
The Pas
Moose Lake
Grand Rapids
Easterville
Lake Winnipegosis
Lake Winnipeg
Poplar River
Poplar/ Nanowin Rivers Park Reserve
Swan River
Yorkton
Dauphin
Riding Mountain National Park
Neepawa
Portage la Prairie
Winnipeg
Selkirk
Steinbach
Lac du Bonnet
Pinawa
Kenora
Atikaki Provincial Park
Woodland Caribou Provincial Park
Red Lake
Pikangikum
Roseau
Warroad
Baudette
International Falls
Koochiching
RED LAKE RESERVATION
Big River
Loon Lake
Meadow Lake
Candle Lake
Christopher Lake
Leoville
Spiritwood
Shellbrook
Maidstone
Cochin
Unity
Humboldt
Lanigan
Watrous
Wynyard
Wadena
Kindersley
Rosetown
Outlook
Davidson
Canora
Kamsack
Melville
Roblin
Russell
Ashern
Arborg
Gimli
Morden
Winkler
Altona
Thief River Falls

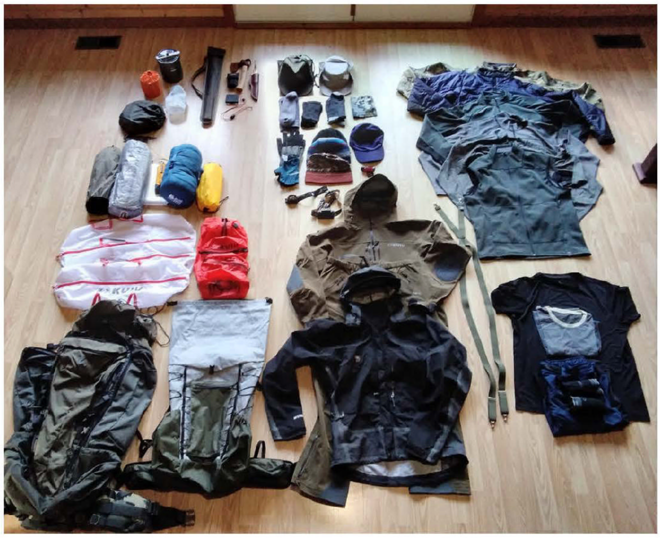
The extraordinary voyages of early Spanish, Dutch, French, and British sailors and mapmakers have been a constant motivator and inspiration. Following in their paths, I am an enthusiastic proponent of using traditional navigational skills and techniques while voyaging.

Q: Why did you choose this route?

A: From a logistical perspective, it is possible to complete this route solo in a single season. Beyond logistics, it includes many of the traditional routes Indigenous peoples used for millennia, not only to traverse vast swaths of Canada but to guide some of North America's earliest European explorers and cartographers.

The journal entries of Radisson, Champlain, Thompson, Mackenzie, and Fidler—to name a few—remind us that some of Canada's most remote wildernesses were, and are, crisscrossed by well-worn trails used by Indigenous peoples for trade, ceremony, hunting, and conflict.

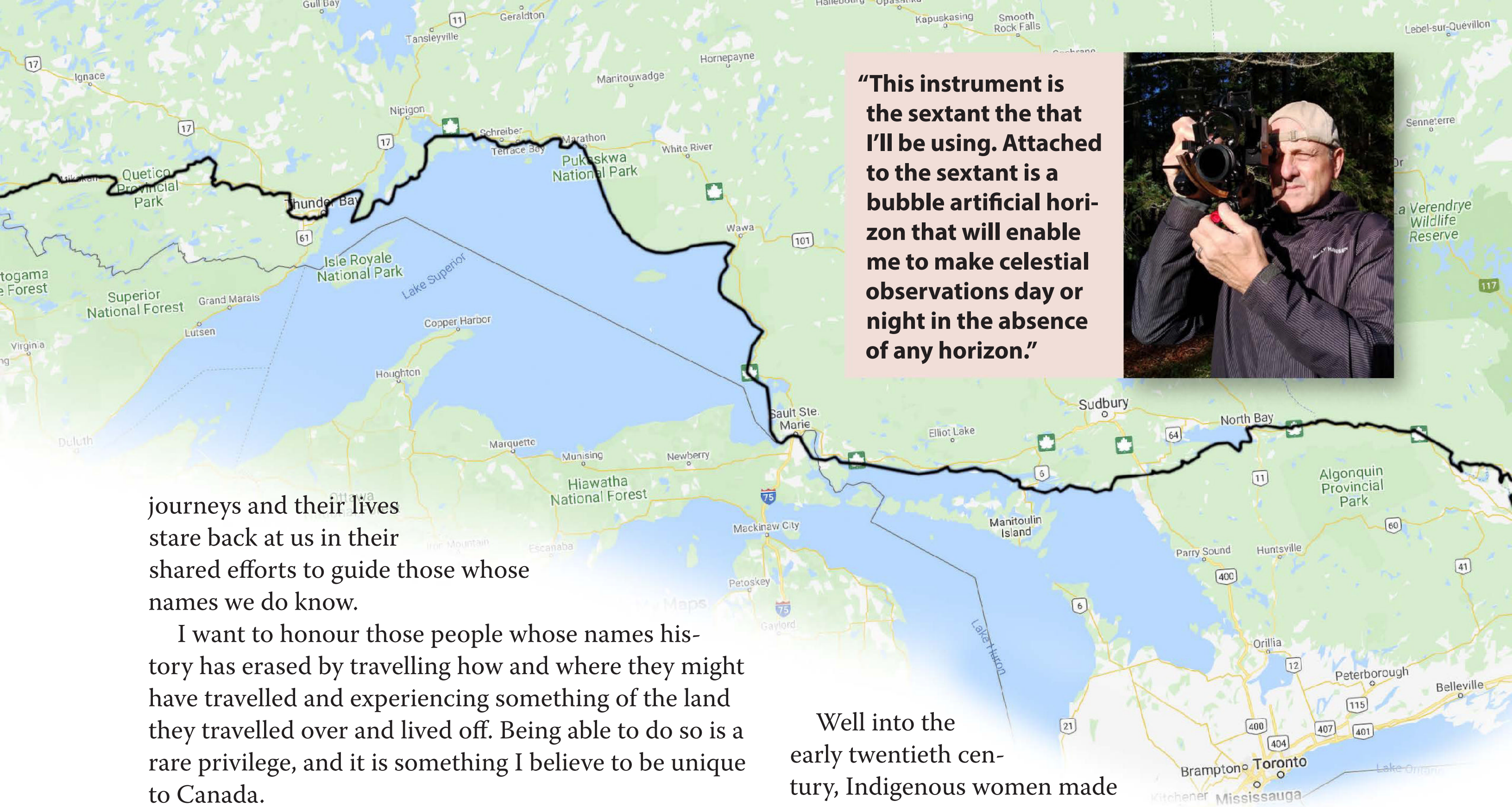
I want to walk the same paths and paddle the same waters in the footsteps and wakes of those people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who have helped shape this country. I want to experience the land, the wind and sky, and the water as they might have experienced them. I want to know the hardships they endured, conquered, and triumphed over. I want to experience the same simple, profound joy that follows hardship that they must have. Much of this route remains untouched by modernity, and Canada is very much unchanged if one chooses to cross it on foot and by canoe.



"This is my clothing, gear, and backpack and shows very nearly everything that I'll be using for the entire trek minus the clothing I'll be wearing and food."

This route includes some of Canada's most important geographical inflection points. For example, travelling downstream on the Fraser River, the river valley makes a very abrupt 90-degree swing to the west near Hope. It was at this location that Simon Fraser realized he was not on the Columbia River as he had thought, hoped, and dreamed. His revelation would have enormous consequences for all peoples living in this part of Canada, especially Indigenous peoples, when the border between Canada and the United States was being settled.

My planned route follows in the footsteps of Canadian explorers, but I acknowledge that these same paths and waterways were paddled and crossed again and again by countless thousands of Indigenous travellers and families, every bit as curious and intrepid. Much to our detriment, their names and exploits remain lost to the documentary record. Yet their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Marathon
Pukaskwa National Park
White River
Quetico Provincial Park
Thunder Bay
Wawa
Isle Royale National Park
Lake Superior
Superior National Forest
Grand Marais
Lutsen
Copper Harbor
Houghton
Duluth
Marquette
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Hiawatha National Forest
Sault Ste. Marie
Elliot Lake
Sudbury
North Bay
Senneterre
La Verendrye Wildlife Reserve
Algonquin Provincial Park
Manitoulin Island
Mackinaw City
Escanaba
Petoskey
Gaylord
Lake Huron
Parry Sound
Huntsville
Orillia
Peterborough
Belleville
Brampton
Toronto
Mississauga
Kitchener
Lake Ontario

"This instrument is the sextant the that I'll be using. Attached to the sextant is a bubble artificial horizon that will enable me to make celestial observations day or night in the absence of any horizon."

journeys and their lives stare back at us in their shared efforts to guide those whose names we do know.

I want to honour those people whose names history has erased by travelling how and where they might have travelled and experiencing something of the land they travelled over and lived off. Being able to do so is a rare privilege, and it is something I believe to be unique to Canada.

Q: What kind of training are you doing to prepare?

A: It is hard to underestimate the physical challenge this excruciatingly long trip presents. It is possible to endure almost anything for a short time—undertaking something you know is going to be mentally, physically, and emotionally challenging for months and months on end is something else entirely.

To prepare, I'm simply doing as much of what I expect to be doing as much as possible. That means walking with and without a pack for distances of up to 32 kilometres a day and portaging, either by carrying or pulling the loaded canoe on a trailer, also up to 32 kilometres a day. And, of course, paddling the canoe.

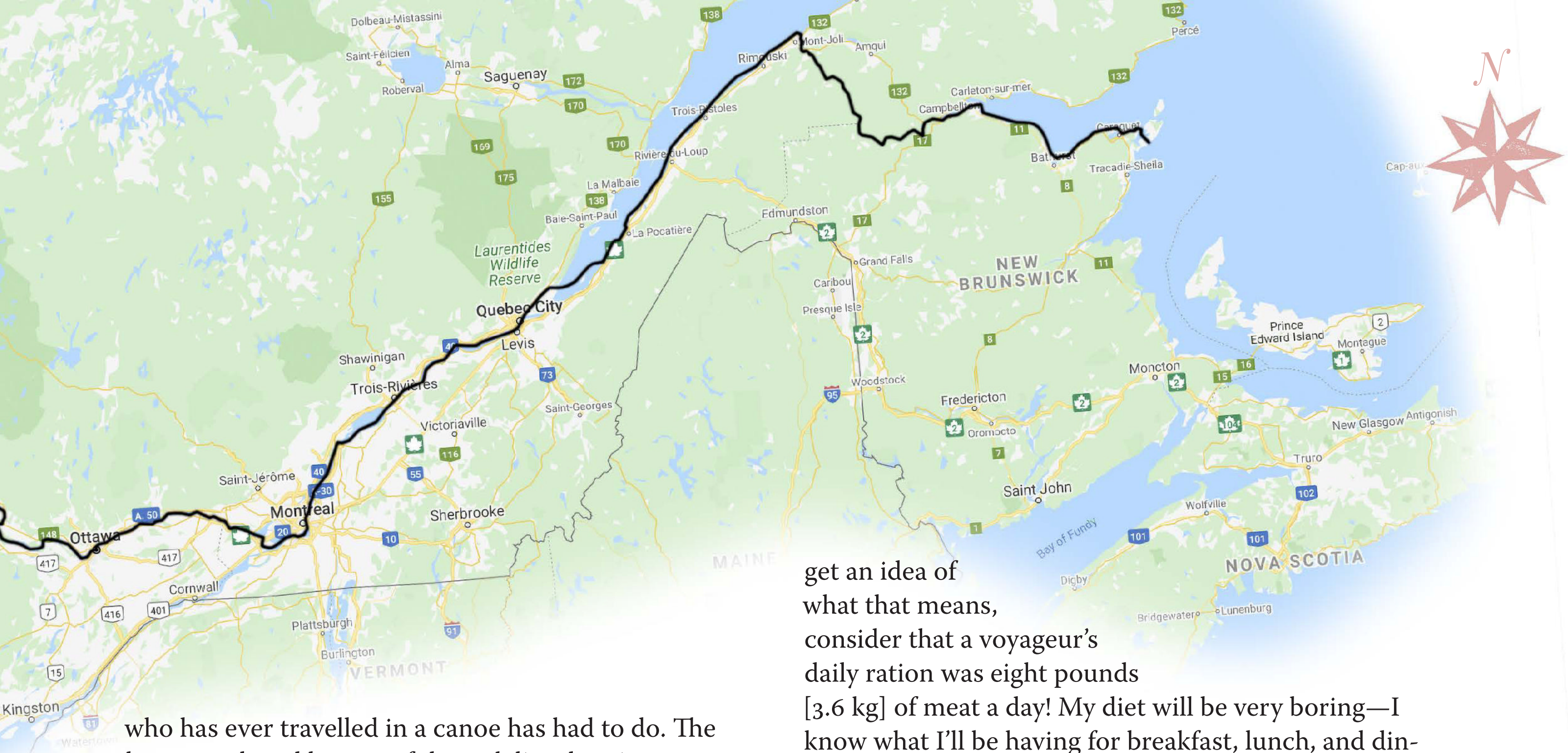
The largest waterway on Gabriola Island is barely a metre wide, so I'm limited to paddling in and around the island. I can, however, mimic paddling upstream by attempting to stem the strong tidal streams that run through Gabriola Pass and False Narrows. Still, I am sorely lacking in whitewater paddling experience and that will be something I must try to remedy before my departure.

Training also includes researching, buying, and trying the gear I will need and discarding those things that don't work, won't last, or prove impractical. Nothing is more important than the right clothing. My last line of defence will be the clothes on my back, and given that I can carry only a few, very limited choices, those choices must be good if I am to succeed. Clothing is the biggest advantage I have over the generations of Indigenous and European travellers before me.

Well into the early twentieth century, Indigenous women made travelling overland on foot in this country possible. How? They made all the clothing, including shoes. Travelling across some of Canada's harshest environments sometimes meant wearing out a pair of moccasins a day. Imagine, if you can, making a pair of shoes a day all while travelling, cooking, feeding, and housing an extended family. This was one of the reasons that David Thompson and Peter Fidler travelled with their wives and families over tens of thousands of miles and for many decades. Consider, for example, Samuel Hearne's travels into the barrens north and east of Hudson's Bay. Swayed by the urgent warnings of his lifelong friend and principal guide, the Chipewyan [Dënë Sųłıné] Chief Matonabbee, Samuel Hearne defied the Hudson's Bay Company Factor who commanded him to map and explore the Coppermine River basin. He flatly refused to go unless his guides could bring their wives and families. Without them, he knew the expedition would fail.

Q: How will you travel?

A: I will travel on foot when necessary and by canoe when possible. While on foot, I'll either be portaging by carrying the canoe overhead, pulling it behind me on a small trailer, or dragging it overland. I'll also be forced to drag the canoe upriver by either lining or towing. While in the canoe, I'll either be paddling, poling, or sailing. What we know as a canoe is a uniquely Canadian vessel that dates back hundreds of years. The design has changed very little. I must do what anyone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Caraquet
Bathurst
Tracadie-Sheila
Cap-aux
Trois-Pistoles
Rivière-du-Loup
La Malbaie
Baie-Saint-Paul
La Pocatière
Laurentides Wildlife Reserve
Edmundston
Grand Falls
NEW BRUNSWICK
Caribou
Presque Isle
Quebec City
Levis
Shawinigan
Trois-Rivières
Saint-Georges
Victoriaville
Woodstock
Fredericton
Oromocto
Moncton
Prince Edward Island
Montague
New Glasgow
Antigonish
Truro
Saint John
Bay of Fundy
Wolfville
Digby
NOVA SCOTIA
Bridgewater
Lunenburg
Saint-Jérôme
Montreal
Sherbrooke
Ottawa
Cornwall
Plattsburgh
Burlington
MAINE
VERMONT
Kingston
Watertown

who has ever travelled in a canoe has had to do. The heart, soul, and beauty of the trek lies therein.

Q: How will you navigate?

A: I'll use the same traditional tools and techniques that were used to map nearly all of Canada and most of the world: I will have a compass, sextant, almanac, tables, and pencil and paper. No GPS, no cell phones, and no calculators. I will, of course, have maps.

Until recently, the only maps available for substantial chunks of Canada were, in large part, based on maps made by late eighteenth and early nineteenth century explorers and cartographers, in particular Thompson and Fidler. Considering the enormous distances, varied geography, and incredible obstacles that a typical Canadian landscape presents, mapping with any degree of accuracy is a monumental undertaking. The fact that it was done with incredible precision, using only the primitive tools and technology available at the time, is hardly fathomable. They mapped the world using careful observations of the sun, moon, stars, and planets using simple instruments you can now make at home and a bit of trigonometry. I'll be doing the same observations and calculations to figure out where I am and where I need to go.

Q: How will you feed and take care of yourself?

A: The route is never very far away from other people. Paddling solo down the North Saskatchewan River through downtown Edmonton is not exactly "being alone." I will resupply often, and I don't expect to carry more than four weeks of food at any time. Luckily, I am not a fussy eater, so lukewarm, undercooked oatmeal every day for months on end is not an issue.

There is, however, an issue with getting enough calories to fuel the physical work needed to be done. To get an idea of what that means, consider that a voyageur's daily ration was eight pounds [3.6 kg] of meat a day! My diet will be very boring—I know what I'll be having for breakfast, lunch, and dinner every day for at least seven months—but the sky's the limit on quantity.

Food is obviously important, but it isn't the most important component of well-being. Rest is. Proper rest means allowing for physical recuperation and mental recharging. The question is how, when, and where do I balance pushing my limits when I know I must rest? Taking proper care of myself means striking that balance.

Q: What does it feel like as a journey is just getting underway?

A: In many ways, it's harder than the journey itself. I am inundated with trying to plan, prepare, and train. I have weeks and weeks of research yet to do not just on the route itself. I must also commit to memory a good chunk of its history if I'm to write about those places as I travel. And there simply will not be enough time to ensure I'm bringing the right gear. When the trip finally starts, all that I could have done, or hoped to have done, will be in the past.

"There is more yet to be done" is a sentiment familiar to anyone who has ever undertaken any kind of journey. Leaving those thoughts and feelings behind is the difference between those who do and those who do not.

Q: What does it feel like to be using the same navigational tools as generations before you?

A: There are only very few ways we can hope to experience something of the way previous generations lived their lives. The food, clothing, and accommodation routinely available to us is so far beyond what was available 30 years ago, let alone 300, that it beggars comparison. The average Canadian today lives like royalty of 150 years ago. Yet there remains one sure way to experience almost exactly what every human has felt for generations. One need only get turned around in a forest to experience the gut-wrenching fear that comes with getting lost.

Purposefully heading for a distant horizon and finding your way home again using the same techniques and skills that early travellers did brings you closer to their experiences than anything else. Spending a night or two in a high-tech, waterproof down sleeping bag, encapsulated in a SilNylon tent supported by carbon-fibre poles, protected from hordes of bugs by no-see-um netting, sipping hot chocolate boiled over an iso-propane stove doesn't do it. But doing that while not knowing exactly where you are and where you need to go tomorrow does.

Q: What is your approach to solo travelling in terms of safety?

A: Any accident resulting in injury, no matter how small, could spell disaster. Travelling solo, whether on land or sea, means I can take no unnecessary risks. No matter what I'm facing, I must consider the most conservative solution to any immediate challenge not just prudent, but necessary. This is far easier said than done, especially when circumstances and conditions are deteriorating. Humans by nature are optimistic and downplay or outright ignore obvious risks, especially when those risks have a low probability of occurring. This is a guaranteed recipe for disaster, as accidents are typically a long cascade of seemingly random, very low-probability events occurring sequentially.

Bert's Rations

"The challenge is going to be carrying enough food to fuel the physical effort required to paddle, portage, track, and/or line the canoe and all my gear. Out of necessity, my diet is going to be dreadfully boring! I pretty much know what I'll be eating for any given meal on any given day for the whole trek.

Breakfast: Oatmeal supplemented with raisins, walnuts, or almonds, and brown sugar.

Lunch: Moose jerky or pemmican. Dehydrated vegetable or fruit bark. Peanut butter and brown sugar wraps.

Dinner: Pasta or quinoa flavoured with double-smoked Landjaeger sausage, pesto sauce, parmesan cheese, or a pre-packaged sauce.

"Snacks will be whatever I can resupply with along the way. I'll boil or filter water to stay hydrated. Tea sweetened with brown sugar is going to be a staple throughout the trip.

"My plan is to prepare the moose jerky, vegetable, and fruit bark before I leave and store it in vacuum-sealed bags. Since I won't be carrying more than 21 days of food with me, I'll need to arrange for any prepared foods to be forwarded to me at strategic locations. Staples like oatmeal and pasta I'll need to purchase as I make my way across Canada.

"Were I a foodie, the menu would be torturous. Luckily, I'm not that fussy!"

It is also easy, tempting, and dangerously arrogant to assume we know more than we do. The simple truth is we know very little about what lies beyond the next bend in the river and nothing at all about the future. Staying safe means being respectful and humble in all things.

Q: What does your family think/hope for/worry about with respect to your journey?

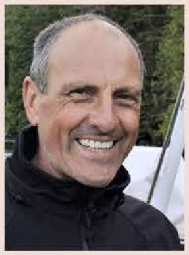
A: My wife, Nani, and my family have always been my staunchest allies and supporters. Imagine your partner's reaction if you wanted to do something like this. Think what you'd be asking of them. Nani has a far harder task ahead of her than me. I need only worry about what's right in front of me; I can know and perhaps control that. Nani, and by extension the rest of my family and friends, can know nothing of what I am doing or experiencing. They can only hope that I return safely.

Q: What do you hope to find?

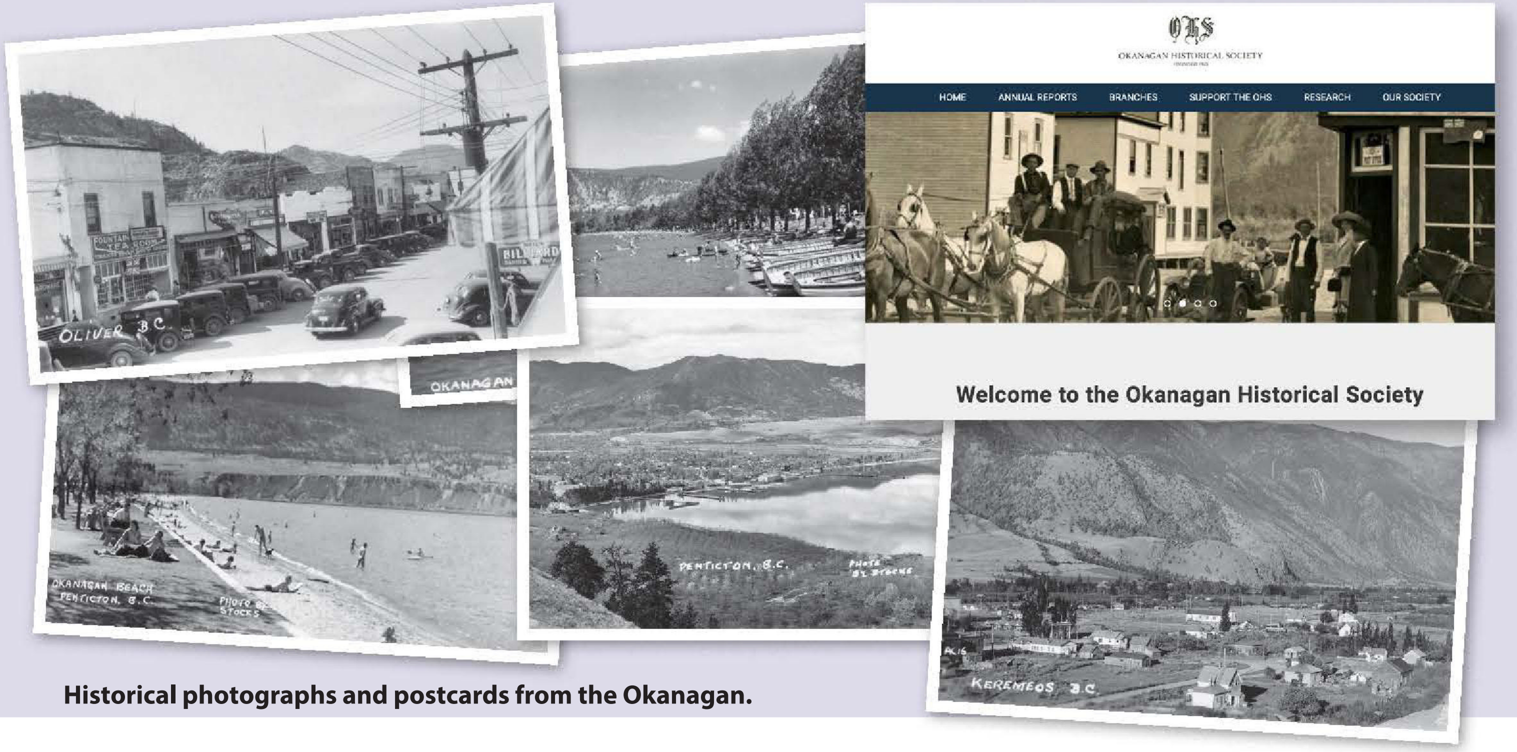
A: Let me reframe the question as "What do you seek?". I look to reconnect in some small way with those who have gone before me and understand something about the relationship that those people had with the land. How did it shape them, their lives, their stories, their loves? And how, ultimately, did all that became a part of this place we now call Canada?

I look to understand something more about myself.

And I hope to inspire others to follow their own dreams, to seek their own adventures, to tell their own stories. Every adventure, big or small, begins with one tiny, almost imperceptible step. Every adventure, big or small, is transformational in ways that you cannot imagine—until you begin.



Bert ter Hart was born and raised on the Canadian Prairies. He was a platoon commander in the Canadian Special Service Forces, rising to the rank of captain. In graduate school, he studied to become a physical oceanographer. He became an entrepreneur, developing software and IT automations for health care professionals. After his seven-month-long, non-stop, unsponsored, solo circumnavigation of the world via the five Capes in 2020, Bert was awarded the Ocean Sailing Club Barton Cup, the highest award one can receive in recognition of accomplishments at sea.



Historical photographs and postcards from the Okanagan.

Okanagan Historical Society

By Mark Forsythe

Seeing the tree beneath
Its baptism of snow, the twigs
Seem dark, and the bark feels
Cold to your hands, but inside she
Pulses with the urgency of green.

From the 36th Annual Report of the Okanagan Historical Society (1972) written by Donna Lezard of SnPink'tn (The Penticton Indian Band) which represents one of the seven communities of the Okanagan Nation

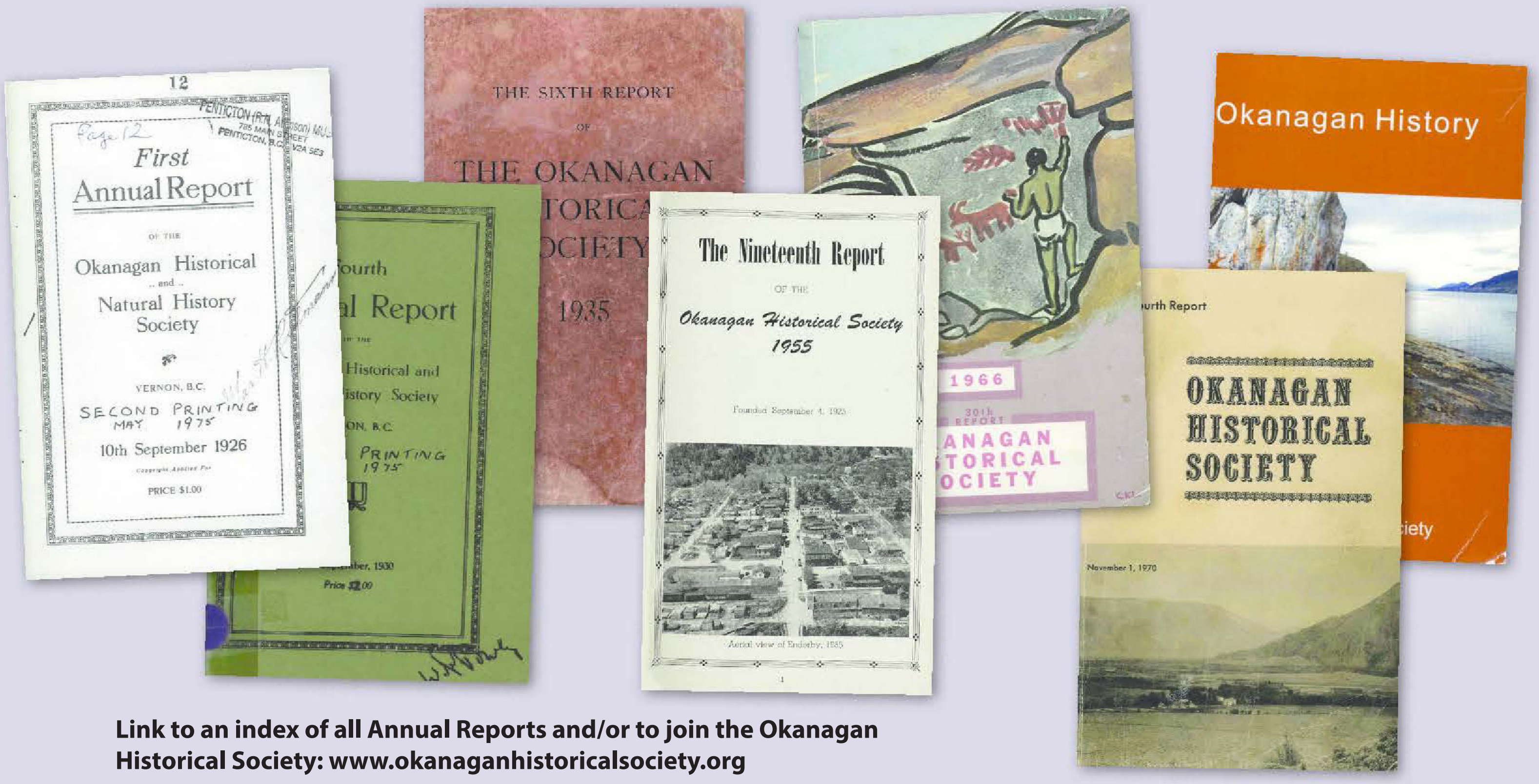
A legacy of storytelling. This year marks the centennial of the British Columbia Historical Federation and we're excited to salute the work of member organizations like the Okanagan Historical Society (OHS). The OHS has generated thousands of stories about the region's people, events, and landscapes in 85 Annual Reports—each a book unto itself. This remarkable tradition began with the Society's formation in 1925. In the following year, president Leonard Norris noted, "A start at least has been made at the work of drawing aside the veil which hangs over the past history of our valley."

The Report encompasses three watersheds: Okanagan, Shuswap, and Similkameen. Branches are rooted in Salmon Arm, Armstrong-Enderby, Vernon, Kelowna, Summerland, Penticton, Oliver-Osoyoos, and Similkameen, with each contributing to the Annual Report. In the early years, road travel in the region was an ordeal, so the publication connected and communicated with members across this vast area. As the province began to open up for travel, the OHS was also keen to share its story with the rest of BC.

Jessie Ann Gamble of Armstrong is a past president of the Society. She says the first priority continues to be publishing Okanagan history. "Our readers like to support the recording of local history and feel the written word has a longer shelf life than Facebook." Historian and former O'Keefe Ranch curator Ken Mather is the current editor. "My mission is to assemble the entire gamut of articles, from family histories to scholarly studies. I've also tried to include natural history articles; after all, the society started out as the Okanagan

Explore this surprising array of Okanagan stories, written by the people who live there at this link: www.okanagan-historicalsociety.org.

Digital copies of back issues are available through UBCO's British Columbia Regional Digitized History: https://tinyurl.com/yckteuvv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Page 12

PENTICTON (R.N. Atkinson) MUSEUM
785 MAIN STREET
PENTICTON, B.C. V2A 5E3

First
Annual Report
of the
Okanagan Historical
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1935

The Nineteenth Report
OF THE
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Aerial view of Enderby, 1955
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Link to an index of all Annual Reports and/or to join the Okanagan Historical Society: www.okanaganhistoricalsociety.org

Historical and Natural History Society. I am committed to including cultural diversity, from Indigenous People to newcomers."

Ken is in distinguished company. In 1935 Margaret Ormsby was one year away from her PhD in history when she became editor of the Sixth Annual Report, the first of nine that she guided. Ormsby later authored the definitive *British Columbia: A History*, was president of the British Columbia Historical Federation for a dozen years, and broke new ground for women at McMaster University and the University of British Columbia. BC's most famous professional historian felt most at home back in the Okanagan; in retirement, she returned to the family house beside Kalamalka Lake to write more local history.

The Reports have been consistently eclectic over the decades. The Second Report (1927) featured an account of the first marriage at Okanagan Mission, the "Rise and Fall of Rock Creek," and "Indian Picture Writing." Leap ahead to the 67th Report (2003) to read about mysterious "airship" sightings reported in 1896, a student essay on mixed marriages, and a lament for rodeo legend Kenny McLean who died sitting on his horse. The page count on this issue clocks in at 244.

Wendy Wickwire, professor emerita in the Department of History at University of Victoria, scoured the Annual Reports for information about Similkameen elder and storyteller Harry Robinson. She eventually published three award-winning volumes of his oral stories. "I consider those Annual Reports to be among BC's richest archival treasures. There is nothing I have enjoyed more over the years than leafing through the reports, year by year, because each time I've done this I've found golden nuggets. They offer such rich first-hand accounts of life in the Okanagan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Jessie Ann Gamble is proud of their publishing record and scope. "We have always tried to include marginalized groups of any kind, but in recent years the editors have worked hard to include Indigenous stories and writers." Editor Ken Mather says this collaboration has a long history. "Most of the early ranchers in the Okanagan/Similkameen married Indigenous wives and, through the 1870s, mixed families were the norm. When the OHS was formed, offspring of these families were involved in the organization and contributed Indigenous content."

In addition to producing the Annual Report, the OHS branches are fully engaged with other projects: overseeing the Pandosy Mission lease (Kelowna's first European settlement); the annual student essay contest; supporting historic trails; a presence in the abandoned gold-rush town of Fairview; and working with the UBC Okanagan campus on digitizing the Annual Reports. The Okanagan is fortunate to have these collaborative and enduring storytellers

Mark Forsythe travels through BC and back in time, exploring the unique work of British Columbia Historical Federation Members.

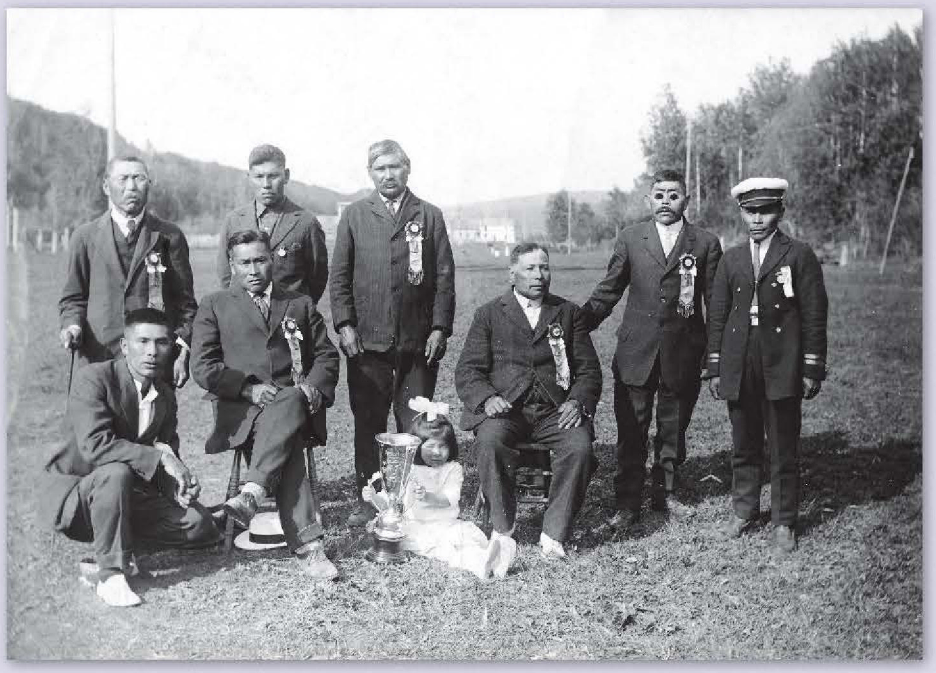
ARCHIVES & ARCHIVISTS

Snapshot: A century ago in BC

By Emily Lonie

To mark the BC Historical Federation's 100th year, ten archivists from around the province offered a favourite photograph from their collections, taken around 1922.

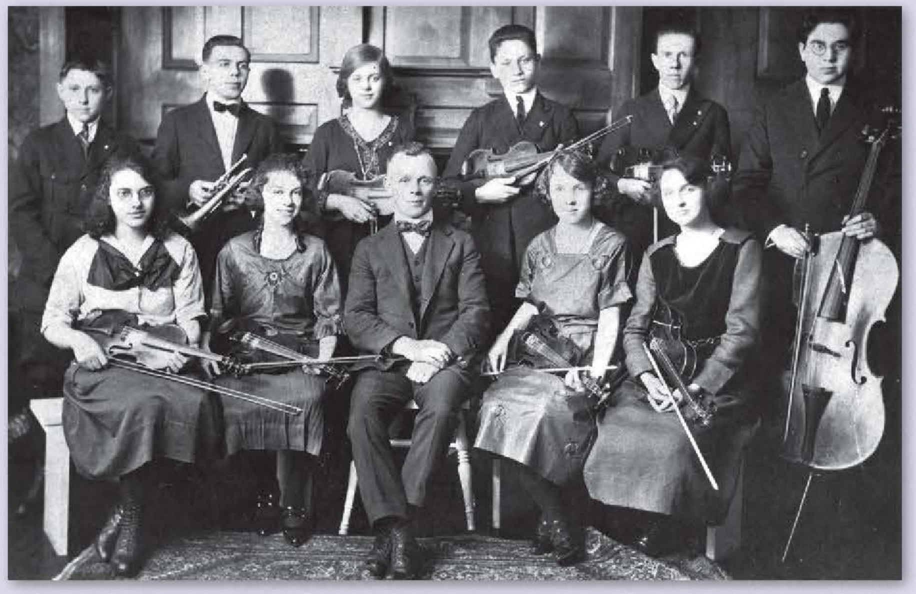
Emily Lonie began her career as a government records archivist at Library and Archives Canada. In 2013, she established the City of Coquitlam Archives and served as city archivist until July, 2021. Emily is now the executive director of the Vancouver Heritage Foundation.



Kim Stathers, Northern BC Archives and Special Collections

The photograph depicts the Gitlaxt'aamiks Village Council in 1923 with young Ruth Adams holding an unidentified trophy. Also pictured (L-R) are Charlie Morven, George Manase, John Davis, Dennis Woods, Andrew Nass, James Adams, Frank Blackwing, and Walter McMillan (Nass).

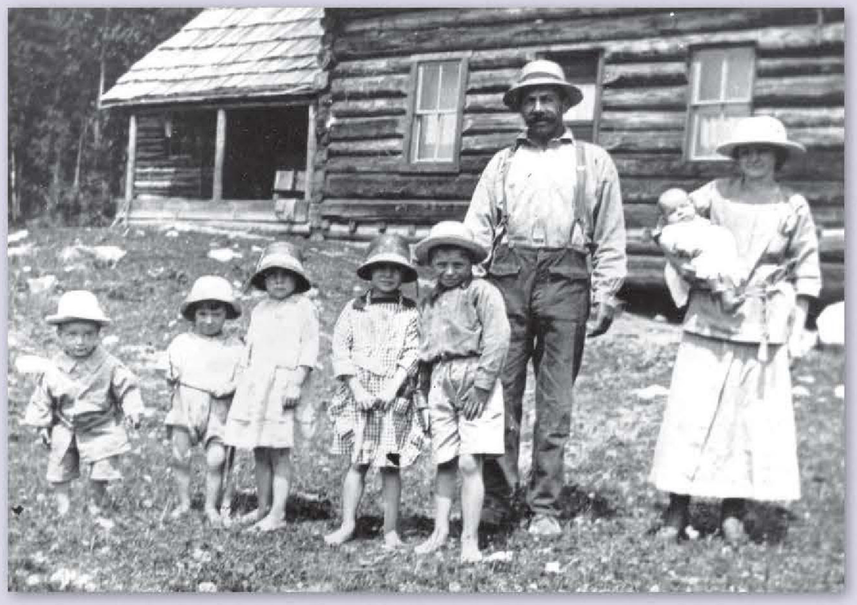
Photo: The Archdeacon W.H. Collison fonds , 2009.7.1.117



Alysa Routtenberg, Jewish Museum and Archives of BC

In 1922, Vancouver's King Edward High School Orchestra included two members of the Jewish community: Eugene Mahrer (top right) and Norman Brown (top, third from right).

Photo: Jewish Museum and Archives of BC L.00080



Jackie Pearase, Enderby & District Museum

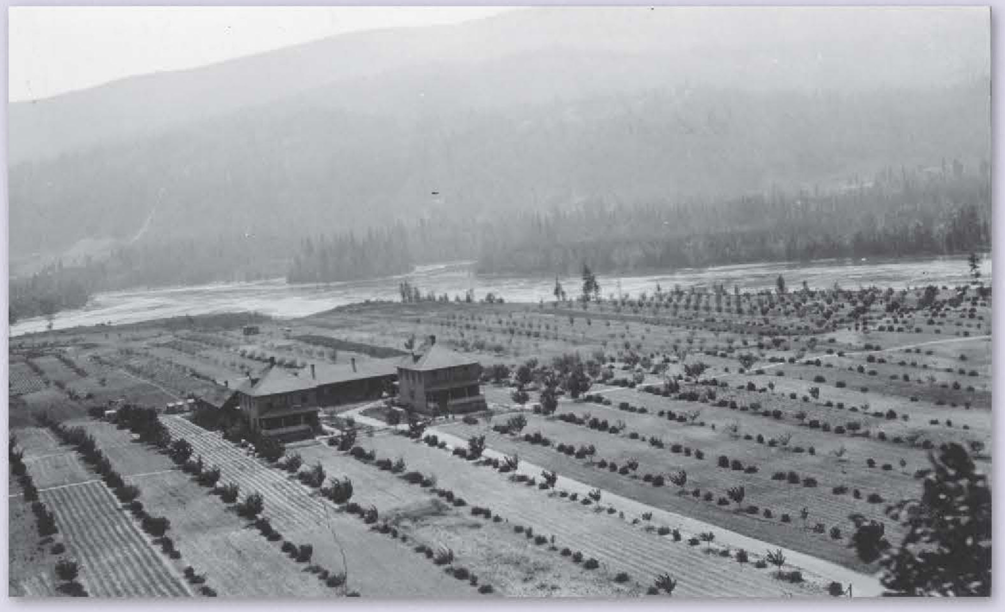
The photograph shows the Potrie family in front of their home on Potrie Road at Hupel in Kingfisher, located east of Enderby. The home was part of a 160-acre [64.75 square hectares] homestead established in 1913.

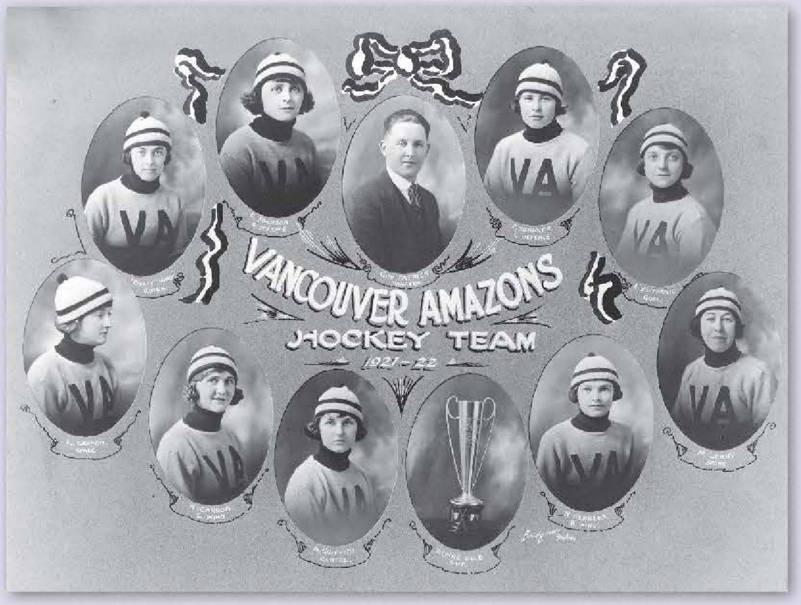
Photo: Enderby & District Museum, 2619

Jean-Philippe Stienne, Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History

The photograph shows the Doukhobor communal settlement of Brilliant, with orchards and the Kootenay River, in 1922. The headquarters of Community Doukhobors in BC, Brilliant was named by Peter Verigin after the brilliant, sparkling waters of the Columbia River that flowed beside the settlement.

Photo: Alexander Leith (1865–1932) fonds





Heather Gordon, City of Vancouver Archives

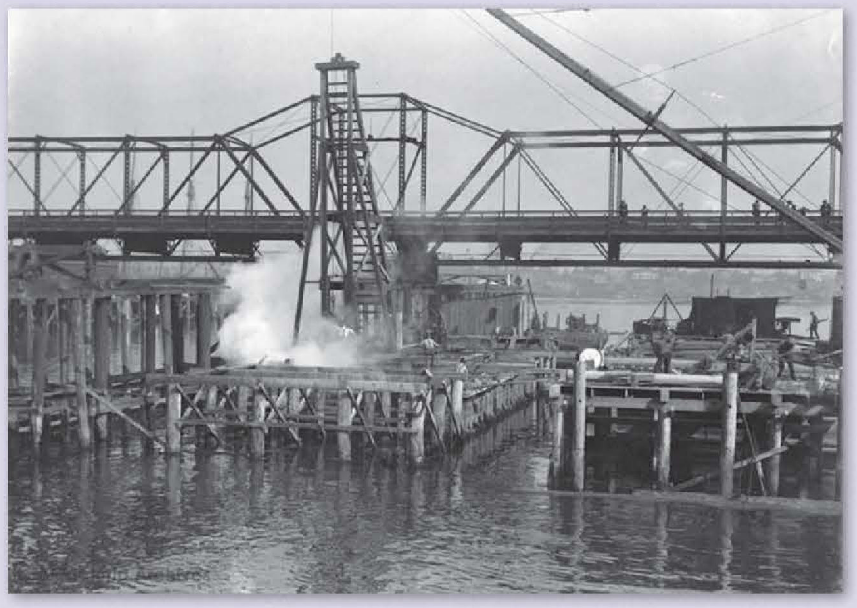
In February 1922, the Vancouver Amazons emerged as the women's ice hockey champions of western Canada at the Banff Winter Carnival.

Photo: Major Matthews collection, CVA AM54-S4-: Sp P108

Rebecca Pasch, City of Burnaby Archives

A group enjoys the sunny weather while boating on Burnaby's Deer Lake.

Photo: Peers Family and Hill Family fonds, 477-625



Sarah Rathjen, City of Victoria Archives

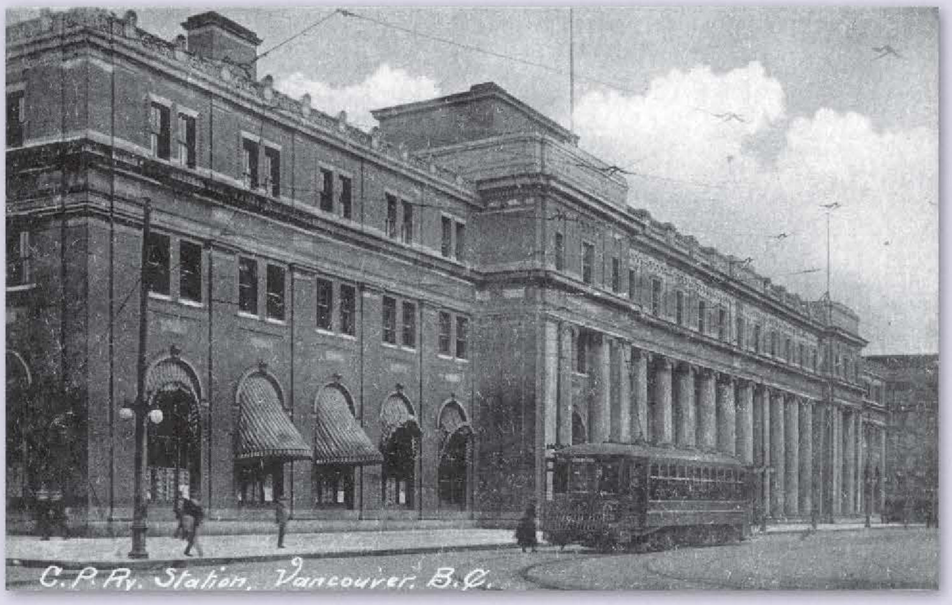
The photograph shows the construction of the Johnson Street bridge in Victoria, specifically the driving of piles with a steam hammer on the main trunnion pier.

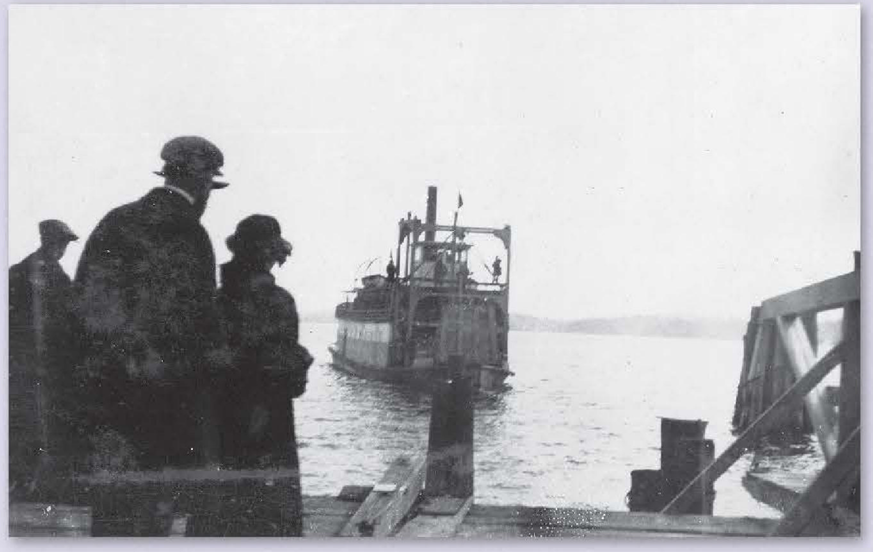
Photo: John Howard Arthur Chapman fonds, PR-0096-M08393

Andréa Tarnawsky, Simon Fraser University Library Special Collections and Rare Books

The postcard depicts Waterfront Station in Vancouver in 1922. It was the Pacific terminus for the Canadian Pacific Railway's transcontinental passenger trains. Its grand neoclassical design and ornate architecture are an iconic and enduring piece of the Vancouver cityscape.

Photo: British Columbia Postcards Collection, MSC130-3383-01

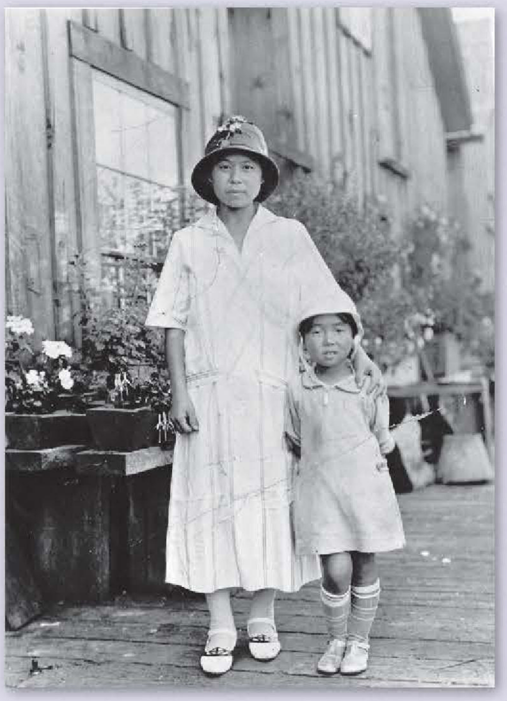




Sonia Nicholson, Saanich Pioneer Society

The photograph depicts the arrival of the first Anacortes to Sidney ferry, which was quite the event in Sidney. *The Review* reported that most businesses closed and children were given a half-day off school. About 300 people and 25-30 cars made the first trip.

Photo: Goddard Family fonds



Krisztina Laszlo, UBC Rare Books and Special Collections

Mrs. Ume Niwatsukino with Hisako in Steveston, 1926.

Photo: Japanese Canadian Research Collection, JCPC-25-086

Get Published

British Columbia History welcomes ideas for feature articles, as well as articles, photos, and book suggestions for our regular sections. *British Columbia History* is committed to publishing content that informs, entertains, and connects readers across British Columbia.

We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. Please contact the editor with a brief overview of your work prior to submission.

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Manuscripts that have been published elsewhere, or are under review for publication elsewhere, will be considered at the editor's discretion.

- Electronic version, with file extension (either .doc or .rtf), will be required should the article be accepted for publication.
- Endnotes, Notes, and Bibliography style must follow *Chicago Manual of Style.* Do not insert notes in text.
- Illustrations are encouraged:
  - Submit copies of permissions (or assurance of permission) for the images;
  - Sufficient resolution for high-quality reproduction, 300 DPI (dots per inch) minimum or a pixel dimension of 1200x1500 pixels, (with the exception of images such as coins; minimum 600x600 pixels) preferable in jpg or tif format;
  - Not embedded in text—send as separate files;
  - Please provide suggested captions for the illustrations;
  - Image credit information must be provided with all illustrations;
  - Low-resolution images may be sent with initial submission in cases where images would need to be purchased from an institution.
- Include a 2-3 sentence biographical note about the author and photo.

If a manuscript is accepted for publication, major changes will be cleared with authors before publication. Authors will also have the opportunity to do a final proof check prior to publication.

The British Columbia Historical Federation assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Editorial Calendar

***British Columbia History* is a quarterly magazine chronicling British Columbia's unique story through the words and images of community writers, archivists, museum professionals, academic historians, and more.**

SUBMISSIONS

Our editorial team makes every effort to respond to all submission enquiries; however, our magazine operates with a small part-time staff and it may take some time for us to get back to you.

PRINT SCHEDULE

Our editorial team works with set copy deadlines and must often finalize content six months or more in advance of publication.

Issue	Ad Space Close	In Mail
Summer 2022	March 1, 2022	Mid-June 2022
Fall 2022	June 1, 2022	Mid-Sept. 2022
Winter 2022	Sept. 1, 2022	Mid-Dec. 2022
Spring 2023	January 1, 2023	Mid-March 2023

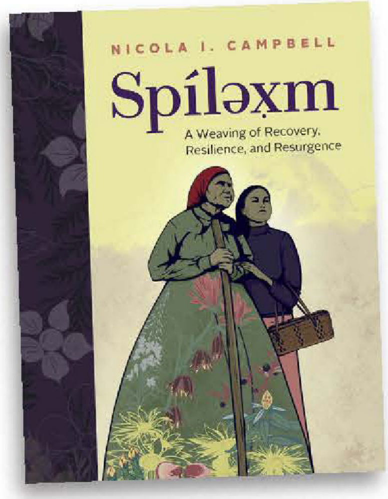
UPCOMING THEMES

Issue	Theme
Summer 2022	Landscapes of Injustice
Fall 2022	Recreation
Winter 2022	The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923
Spring 2023	Climate Change
Summer 2023	Utopias

Books with the Most Impact

The books and digital media profiled in this issue of "Refracting History" will incite many readers to think differently about history. Some reposition historical narratives on the experiences of Indigenous peoples and other racialized communities in British Columbia or voices that share memories and reflections on the impact of residential schools, loss of land, and the revitalization of Indigenous cultures.

—Aimee Greenaway



Spíləx̣m: A Weaving of Recovery, Resilience, and Resurgence by Nicola I. Campbell (Winnipeg, MB: HighWater Press, 2021) $32

Nicola I. Campbell, likely best known for her bestselling children's books including *Shi-shi-etko*, *Shin-chi's Canoe*, and *A Day with Yayah*, has written an extraordinary memoir that combines poetry and prose with memories that speak about what it means to be an intergeneration survivor of residential schools. Nicola I. Campbell is Nłeʔkepmx (Nlaka'pamux), Sylix, and Métis, from British Columbia

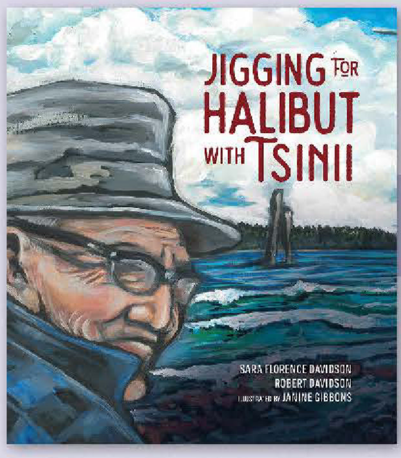
This excerpt from her memoir is from the section called "Porcupine's Song":

Author Nicola I. Campbell

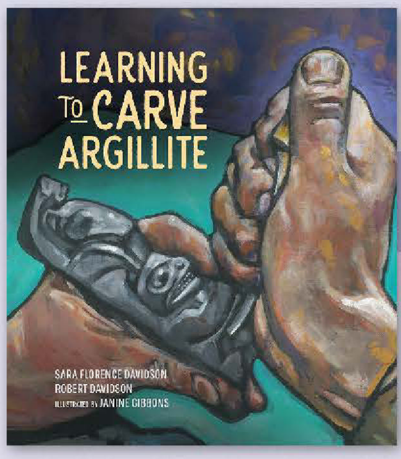
Source: Kalvin Warbus Photography

> What does it mean to have multiple generations of children taken away for part or all of their childhoods to Indian Residential School or into the foster care system? "Imagine a community without children." Imagine an entire country where every single Indigenous baby and child is taken away from their family. Imagine a country where every single child is raised in an environment where love, patience, compassion, and affection do not exist. Imagine a country where every single school has a graveyard and not a playground. In Canada, the theft of Indigenous children into foster care and mass "child apprehension" has resulted in generations of children lost and stolen from almost every single family in our entire community within the Nicola Valley. Generations of children stolen from every single Indigenous family across Canada.
>
> The silence after the children were stolen must have thundered through our valley and all across what is now Canada. The silence must have haunted our Elders day and night. How could they sleep? How could they carry on? How did they survive such utter heartbreak and devastation, without the singing voices of their babies and children? Not knowing if their children were alive or dead. Did they have food? Who held them when they cried? Who could possibly comfort their broken hearts and childhood injuries? How many generations of our grandmothers and grandfathers feared for the safety and well-being of their stolen children?
>
> I understood now why so many Loved Ones remain heartbroken and angry. I understood why so many Loved Ones live in despair and struggle with addictions. When they stole all the babies and rounded up all the children, when they forced Indigenous people off their lands and onto reserves and road allowances, when they denied access to traditional fishing and hunting grounds—they shattered the hearts and spirits of our people.
>
> The Elders have said that before european [sic] contact, the lights from everybody's fires lit the Fraser Canyon like northern lights across the sky. Hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people lived along the Fraser River right from the ocean entrance at what is now Musqueam, through the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, Fraser Canyon, and all the way up to the northern reaches of the Fraser River. The Fraser River and other major rivers traditionally did not just function as a

Continued on page 49


JIGGING FOR HALIBUT WITH TSINII
SARA FLORENCE DAVIDSON
ROBERT DAVIDSON
ILLUSTRATED BY JANINE GIBBONS

Jigging for Halibut with Tsinii by Sara Florence Davidson and Robert Davidson, illustrated by Janine Gibbons (Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press, 2021) $21.95



Learning to Carve Argillite by Sara Florence Davidson and Robert Davidson, illustrated by Janine Gibbons (Winnipeg, MB: Highwater Press, 2021) $21.95

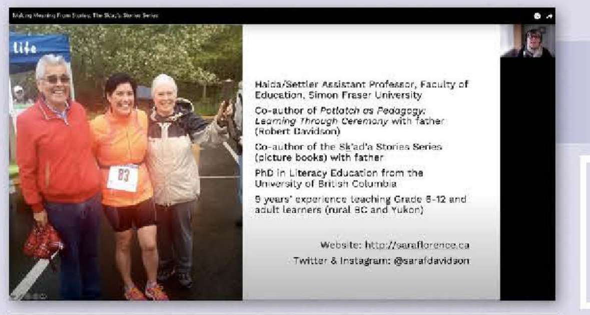
The Sk'ad'a Stories Series highlights values of the Haida people through poignant stories based on the experiences of Robert Davidson, respected master carver and leading figure in the renaissance of Haida art and culture.

Based on events from Robert's childhood, drawn from interviews with him conducted by his daughter, Sara Florence Davidson. The first two books in the series were written from Robert's perspective, first as a child learning from his grandfather and then as a son learning from his father, and they illuminate intergenerational land-based teachings and the sharing of art and cultural knowledge. The third and fourth books, to be released later in 2022, will be written from Sara's perspective and depict Robert teaching his daughter and grandchildren. Authentic learning experiences are important aspects of these stories.

Illustrator Janine Gibbons described her artistic intentions with the stories this way: "Like the burning of dried cedar branches, I try to ignite sparks of connection through my creations." According to author Sara Florence Davidson, the award-winning illustrator "brought the stories to life visually."[1]

The book is designed for ages six to eight years. Pronunciation and teacher's guides for the books are available at www.highwaterpress.com.

The co-authors are Robert Davidson, a significant contemporary artist in Canada, and his daughter, Sara Florence Davidson, a Haida and settler Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. Illustrator Janine Gibbons, a Haida Raven of the Double-Fin Killer Whale Clan, Brown Bear House, is a multidisciplinary artist.


Making Meaning From Stories: The Sk'ad'a Stories Series

Haida/Settler Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University

Co-author of *Potlatch as Pedagogy: Learning Through Ceremony* with father (Robert Davidson)

Co-author of the Sk'ad'a Stories Series (picture books) with father

PhD in Literacy Education from the University of British Columbia

9 years' experience teaching Grade 8-12 and adult learners (rural BC and Yukon)

Website: http://saraflorence.ca

Twitter & Instagram: @sarafdavidson

Making Meaning from Stories: The Sk'ad'a Stories Series https://youtu.be/gGElDeWiVSk

YouTube

Co-author Sara Florence Davidson introduced the book series to support educators who would like to share Indigenous stories like these ones with their students.

CURRICULUM LINK: Students in Grade two are expected to know diverse characteristics of communities and cultures, including at least one Indigenous community in Canada.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
AN UNTOLD HISTORY

British Columbia: An Untold History Digital Timeline https://bcanuntoldhistory.knowledge.ca/#pre-1800

This digital timeline divides BC history into decades, from pre-1800 to the 1990s, and complements the Knowledge Network series by the same name (read the series profile on page 50). Users have the option to select which stories to explore, each one animated by a combination of cited text with photographs, archival records, or video. Each experience can be customized by filtering content by decade, heritage (e.g., Indigenous, South Asian, Eastern European), geographical area of the province, or media type, including video. The timeline can be used to explore BC's history or as research tool for students.

CURRICULUM LINK: Students in Grade eight are expected to assess the significance of people, places, events, or developments at particular times and places.

Continued from page 47

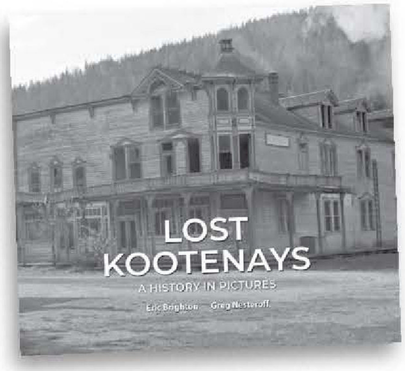
river; they were major highways that provided our primary food source of all species of wild salmon for Indigenous people throughout British Columbia.

Stó:lō orator and historian Naxaxalhts'i explains that the smallpox epidemic arrived in BC and Western North America long before european colonizers physically arrived here. George Vancouver arrived in the Pacific Northwest in 1792 and at that time found villages that were completely decimated. We have heard many stories about the trade blankets contaminated with highly infectious european diseases, that were "gifted" to Indigenous people in eastern North America by early traders in the 1700s. The Indigenous trade economy is vast, and as a result, the smallpox epidemic and then influenza travelled quickly. Oral traditions speak of smallpox travelling like a wave, hitting village after village along the Fraser River, all the way into Northern British Columbia, resulting in the tremendous death of Loved Ones. Our ancestors had never before experienced such complete devastation. Our Elders tell us stories of entire families placed inside pit houses before the smoke hole and exits were sealed.

The constant sorrow that our people face within today's generation began during those epidemics, the dying years. When we were at our weakest, colonizing governments executed destructive policies, and Indian Residential Schools, with graveyards and not playgrounds, were developed for the purpose of solving "the Indian problem." Every single child was stolen from every single Indigenous community across Canada.

Anishinaabe oral traditions speak of North America as "Turtle Island." Despair fell upon Indigenous people all across Turtle Island like a great blanket covering the Turtle's back, woven of the same despair that devastated generations of our ancestors. And now the tattered remains of those blankets of sorrow need to be lifted and put away. As each generation courageously relearns cultural and spiritual practices and responsibilities, new blankets made of love, joy, healing, and perseverance need to be woven.

Reproduced with permission from HighWater Press.



Lost Kootenays: A History in Pictures
by Eric Brighton and Greg Nesteroff
(Lunenburg, Nova Scotia: MacIntyre
Purcell Publishing, 2021) $29.95

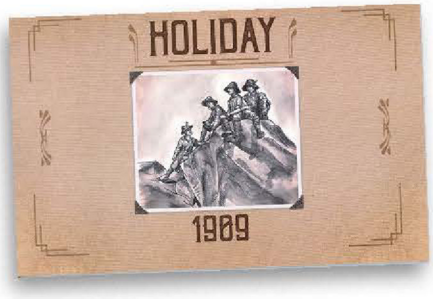
Lost Kootenays: A History in Pictures reminds us just how unique and varied the southeastern corner of the province is in both East and West Kootenay.

Illustrated with more than 130 black-and-white images, the book documents miners, dreamers, packers, hotel-keepers, steamboat captains, hot spring resorts and ghost towns. Stories and photos from the Doukhobor community, Japanese internment camps, Sinixt and Ktunaxa displacement, and Chinese workers are here too.

Lost Kootenays originated as a popular Facebook group that posts archival photographs, postcards, and stories to more than 50,000 followers, many of whom contribute more photos and details. An East Coast publisher observed this enthusiastic online collaboration (MacIntyre Purcell Publishing) and approached the site's administrators, Eric Brighton and Greg Nesteroff, about publishing the best images and stories in an old school format: a hardcover book. Thanks to evocative images—many never seen before—and engaging storytelling, this merging of social media and print publishing works splendidly.

Greg Nesteroff is a journalist, historian, and heritage advocate; Eric Brighton is an amateur photographer, history buff, and Kootenay explorer. Like a couple of Kootenay miners, they've dug deep into one of BC's most storied regions.

—Review by Mark Forsythe



1909 Holiday: A Two-Week Adventure in the Mountains North of Vancouver
by Charles Chapman, edited by
Lid Hawkins (West Vancouver, BC:
Garibaldi Publishing, 2021) $25
garibaldipublishing@gmail.com

In the summer of 1909, four Vancouver men, all members of the

British Columbia Mountaineering Club, embarked on a two-week expedition to climb from North Vancouver to the headwaters of Seymour Creek. One of them, Charles “Chappy” Chapman, recorded the group’s experience in pocket notebooks, which he later transcribed. These are now published in *1909 Holiday: A Two-Week Adventure in the Mountains North of Vancouver.*

The group travelled 37 kilometres to Loch Lomond and back, traversed terrain up to 1,036 metres in elevation, mapped the area, and took photographs that captured the people they met and places they saw along the way. The book includes dozens of those photographs.

Chappy Chapman’s observations of their experiences are descriptive and humorous, including his summary of the group’s provisions and supplies (a copy of Robert Service’s recently published *Songs of a Sourdough* was on the list!), which they evenly distributed into four 50-pound [23 kg] backpacks.

The journal was edited by Lid Hawkins, Chapman’s granddaughter, who carefully packed this story into 108 pages. Where possible, she filled in missing pieces of the story and added pertinent historical notes. *1909 Holiday* is the second book of Chappy Chapman’s travels that Lid Hawkins has edited, and a third title is in the works.

一席之地
A SEAT AT THE TABLE

A Seat at the Table: Chinese Immigration and British Columbia (official exhibition catalogue) by Chinese Canadian Museum of BC, Museum of Vancouver, and University of British Columbia (Altona, MB: FriesenPress, 2021) $45

Food and restaurant culture are a touchstone for the *A Seat at the Table* exhibition, which “explores historical and contemporary stories of Chinese Canadians in the province and their struggles to belong” (3). One of the contemporary stories is “Peanut’s Bubble Tea,” a family-owned business in Richmond and one of the first businesses in Greater Vancouver that offered Taiwanese bubble tea.

Dozens of photographs from private collections connect readers with stories that span over a century, and QR codes link to videos including a virtual reality tour of a Lion Head workshop and a short film series produced for the exhibition. The catalogue is available in English and Simplified Chinese or English and Traditional Chinese versions.

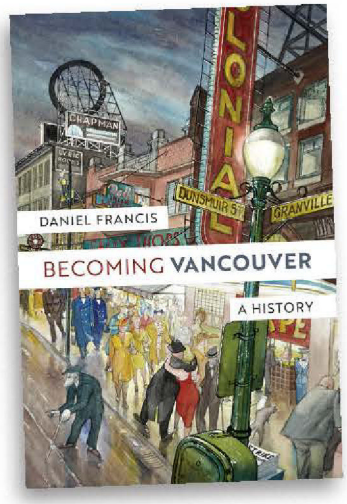
According to Grace Wong, Chair of the Chinese Canadian Museum Society of BC, “This exhibition catalogue bears witness to the transformative shift in thinking about our past, present, and future as we collectively work towards a more just and equitable society” (3).

The exhibition co-curators are Henry Yu, associate professor in the Department of History at UBC, Denise Fong, PhD candidate at UBC, and Vivienne Gosselin, director of collections and exhibitions at the Museum

Recently Released

All the Quiet Places: A Novel by Brian Thomas Isaac (Victoria: TouchWood Editions, 2021) $22
Beyond the Orange Shirt Story by Phyllis Webstad (Victoria, BC: Medicine Wheel Press, 2021) $19.99
Dad Wore a Fedora and Sleeve Garters: A Life Well Lived by Salli Pustanyk Rice (Alton, MB: FriesenPress, 2021) $19.49
Deep, Dark & Dangerous: The Story of British Columbia’s World-Class Undersea Tech Industry by Vickie Jensen (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing: 2021) $36.95
Edward Fuez Jr: A Story of Enchantment by D.L. Stephen (Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain Books, 2021) $28
Luschiim’s Plants: Traditional Indigenous Foods, Materials and Medicines by Dr. Luschiim Arvid Charlie and Nancy Turner (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing: 2021) $29.95
Murders on the Skeena: True Crime in the Old Canadian West, 1884-1914 by Geoff Mynett (Qualicum Beach, BC: Caitlin Press, 2021) $24.95
Possessing Meares Island: A Historian’s Journey into the Past of Clayoquot Sound by Barry Gough (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing: 2021) $36.95
*The Glorious Mountains of Vancouver’s North Shore: A Back Packer’s Guid*e by David Crerar, Harry Crerar, and Bill Maurer (Victoria, BC: Rocky Mountain Books, 2018) $40
Vancouver’s Women in Blue: Trailblazers of the Vancouver Police Department, 1904-1975 by Carolyn J. Daley (Vancouver: Ruddy Duck Press, 2021) $49.95.

of Vancouver. Each authored a curatorial essay for the exhibition catalogue.



Becoming Vancouver: A History by Daniel Francis (Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing, 2021) $36.95

Is Vancouver a “Green City” or “City of Glass”? From the birth of August Jack Khahtsahlano in 1877 at Sen-ákw near the mouth of False Creek to the COVID-19 pandemic and drug overdose crisis in 2020, tensions are a part of the city’s evolving identity.

Daniel Francis’s timeline of Vancouver follows transformation, immigration, and economic development through stories of people and events. Chief Joe Capilano travelled with a delegation to England in 1906 in order to directly advocate with King Edward II for the rights of Indigenous people. Alvo von Alvensleben attracted millions of dollars in German investments to BC in the early 20th century, but ended up having his assets seized during the First World War. And the city’s sex trade is traced from Birdie Stewart’s brothel on Water Street in 1870 to the women murdered by serial killer Robert Pickton at the turn of the 21st century.

Even the book’s index reads like a “Who’s Who” of Vancouver’s history, dotted with lesser known but equally intriguing figures. In *Becoming Vancouver*, Daniel Francis deftly reveals how aspects of the city’s past continue to shape its present relationship with geography, the economy, and politics—and the people who call Vancouver home.

Daniel Frances is the author of more than 30 books, most on the history of Vancouver, BC, and Canada. He has received awards for his significant contributions to furthering the understanding of history locally, provincially, and nationally.

British Columbia: An Untold History
Episodes
Air Dates
Change + Resistance
Labour + Persistence

British Columbia: An Untold History Series https://www.knowledge.ca/program/british-columbia-untold-history

The history of BC is retold in this four-part television series that has sparked important discussions in homes, classrooms, and public history organizations across the province. According to the Knowledge Network website, “Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, Punjabi, Black, and European stories are woven together to present an astute look at the complicated histories that shaped BC as we know it today.”

British Columbia: An Untold History is available to stream for free on the Knowledge Network website and the episodes are titled *Change + Resistance*, *Labour + Persistence*, *Migration + Resilience*, and *Nature + Co-Existence.*

One of the strengths of this documentary series is interviews with people who have lived and studied diverse perspectives in BC history including authors, historians, Elders, and descendants. I watched the series in the fall of 2021 and have not stopped thinking about the complexity of the stories shared and compelling reshaped narratives. No matter how much (or little!) you know about BC history, this series will change the way you think about the past.

BRITISH COLUMBIA HISTORY

Please send books for review to:

Aimee Greenaway
Book Review Editor
British Columbia History
c/o Nanaimo Museum
100 Museum Way, Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J8

An in-depth look at regional history can present nuances that encourage us to reconsider the influence of small communities on BC’s history and share stories that have been overlooked or forgotten until recovered by intrepid researchers.

Are you one of those researchers? If you are and would like to share your research with a broader audience, consider becoming a Wikipedia editor. Anyone can share research on Wikipedia by doing as little as adding a few sentences or a citation to an existing entry, which contributes to easily accessible history content that better reflects our communities. And the BC history research you’ve done may contain the exact information that someone else has been searching for!

THEN AND NOW

JD Ross Showcase Factory

By Mark Forsythe and Sandra Shiell

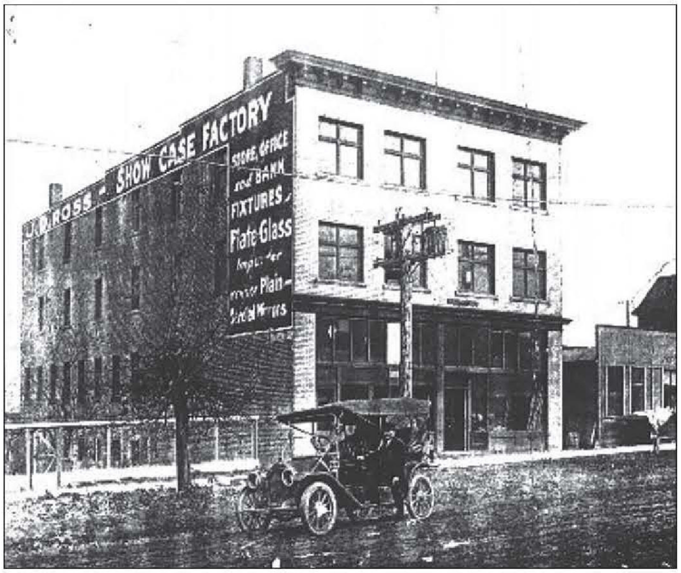
A ghost sign is an advertisement that was hand-painted on a building long ago and still remains. A "ghost sign" uncovered on the side of a Vancouver building during demolition opened a crack in time to the 1920s. The sign for a defunct bakery was hand-painted in red, black, and gold on the building's wooden siding. (People who painted these ads were sometimes called "wall dogs.") Photos of the sign for 4X Bakery Products from Canadian Bakeries were posted to Vancouver Heritage social media and generated more than 40,000 views in two days. The owners of a new building being constructed at the East Vancouver site intend to keep the old sign and feature it in the new structure.

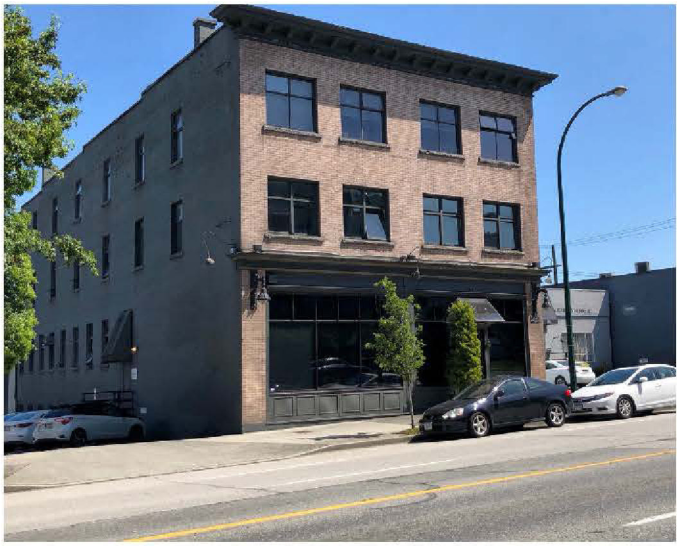
After BCHF posted a *Vancouver Sun* story about the discovery, Sandra Shiell contacted us with another: the JD Ross building in Mount Pleasant. "My great-great-grandfather built this in 1909 for his business, JD Ross Showcase Factory."

Plate-glass showcases were used in stores, banks, and offices, and Sandra's great-great grandfather JD Ross came to hold a Canadian patent for one of his designs.

"John David Ross was born in 1863 in Ontario. He came to Salmon Arm, BC, with his parents, David Ross and Emily Chosse, sometime in the 1880s. He married Agnes Rattray Brown in Kamloops on April 3, 1889. They moved to Vancouver shortly afterwards. They had quite a few children in Vancouver, one of which was my great-grandfather, Carmen Edwin Ross, who went on to become a member and then captain of the Vancouver Fire Department from 1918 to his death in 1950.

"JD Ross & Perry Showcase Factory was located at 291 East 2nd Avenue in Mount Pleasant. East 2nd Avenue was formerly known as Dufferin. The building permit lists JD Ross as the builder in 1909 . . . It makes me proud to see his building still stands, looking very strong and built to last for many more years."





The JD Ross & Perry Showcase Factory in Mount Pleasant, Vancouver.

Photos: Shiell Collection

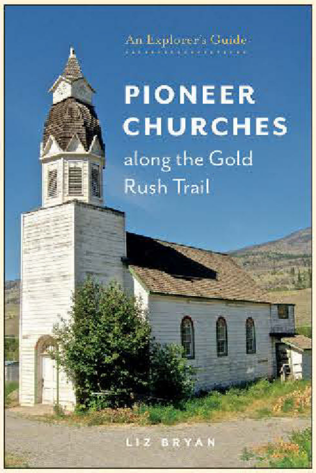
Ghost signs can transport us to a not-so-distant past; the people and stories in their fading colours are still very much alive.

HISTORY IN CONTEXT

Do you have an old photograph with a story to tell?

Contribute the photograph to *British Columbia History* magazine's "Then and Now" feature. We would like to encourage you to help bring a photograph of the past to the present. Anyone can contribute a photograph! Please send your photograph including, information on who or what is in the photograph and and why it is important to you or your community to **bcheditor@bchistory.ca**. It could appear here.

FASCINATING & NEW NON-FICTION
COMING THIS SPRING!


An Explorer's Guide
PIONEER CHURCHES
along the Gold Rush Trail
LIZ BRYAN

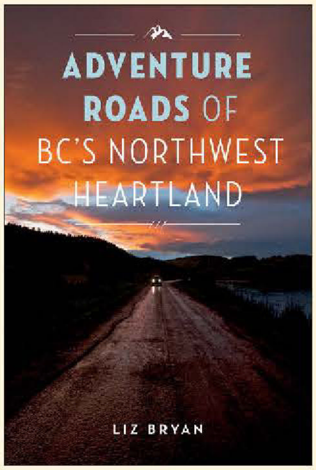
Pioneer Churches along the Gold Rush Trail
An Explorer's Guide

by Liz Bryan

Filled with beautiful colour photography and detailed maps, this captivating tour through BC's historical gold rush trails focuses on the nineteenth-century churches that were pivotal to the establishment of early settler communities.

forthcoming June 2022

$24.95


ADVENTURE ROADS OF BC'S NORTHWEST HEARTLAND
LIZ BRYAN

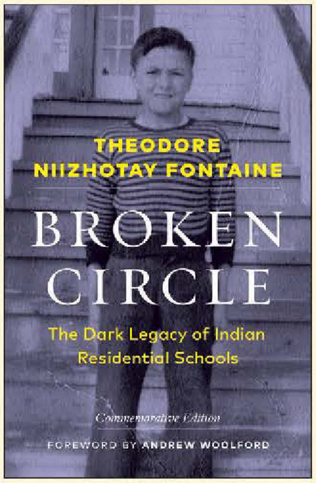
Adventure Roads of BC's Northwest Heartland

by Liz Bryan

From lush forests to majestic mountains, sleepy ghost towns to pastoral farmland, take an off-the-beaten track exploration of Interior BC, full of scenic photography, maps, and engaging details for tourists and armchair travellers alike.

forthcoming June 2022

$24.95


THEODORE NIIZHOTAY FONTAINE
BROKEN CIRCLE
The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools
Commemorative Edition
FOREWORD BY ANDREW WOOLFORD

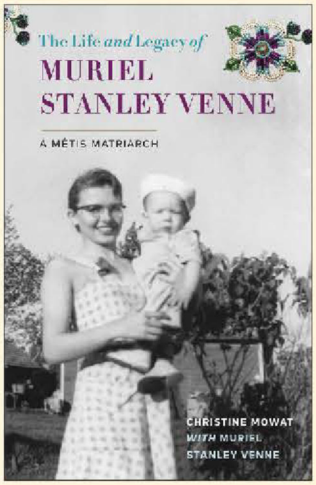
Broken Circle
The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools—Commemorative Edition

by Theodore Niizhotay Fontaine

A commemorative edition of Fontaine's powerful, groundbreaking memoir of survival and healing after years of residential school abuse, with a brand new foreword by Andrew Woolford.

forthcoming May 2022

$24.95


The Life and Legacy of
MURIEL STANLEY VENNE
A MÉTIS MATRIARCH
CHRISTINE MOWAT
WITH MURIEL STANLEY VENNE

The Life and Legacy of Muriel Stanley Venne
A Métis Matriarch

by Christine Mowat with Muriel Stanley Venne

The inspiring biography of Muriel Stanley Venne, a lifelong activist, community leader, and tireless advocate for Indigenous and women's rights, set within the context of landmark legislative and national movements towards truth and reconciliation over the past three decades.

forthcoming April 2022

$29.95

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British Columbia Historical Federation

CONFERENCE

2022

MEMORY

BC HISTORICAL FEDERATION

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http://www.bchistory.ca/conference/

ONLINE

JUNE

2–5